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COMMENTARY,

PRACTICAL AND EXPLANATORY,

ON THE

LITURGY

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

AS USED ON SUNDAYS;

INCLUDING THE

ATHANASIAN CREED.

Ward (Peto)

BY A LAYMAN,

AUTHOR of An Essay on the Holy Sacrament of the
LORD'S SUPPER.

LET EVERY MAN STUDY HIS PRAYERS; AND READ HIS
DUTY IN HIS PETITIONS.

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L O N D O N:

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M.DCC.LXXII.

COMMERCIAL

PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL

LITURGY

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

FOR THE USE OF THE CLERGY

BY THE REV. J. H. B. ...



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by One who is so ready in his Belief

of the former, and so exemplary in his
Practice of the latter. Those extra-
ordinary Talents and Abilities, which

T O

CHARLES JENKINSON, Esq;
ONE OF THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS
OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

employed in promoting the public
Good, and thereby in the service

I Shall make no Apology for offering
you the following Work, how-
ever mean and unworthy of such a Pa-
tron ; because I am persuaded that
your Regard for the Subject of which
it treats, as well as your Partiality to
the Author, will render it a Present not
altogether unacceptable. An humble
Attempt to vindicate the Doctrines,
and enforce the Duties, of our holy
Religion, cannot fail to be approved of

by One, who is so steady in his Belief of the former, and so exemplary in his Practice of the latter. Those extraordinary Talents and Abilities, wherewith God has blessed you, have not been perverted (as is too often the Case) to espouse the Cause of Infidelity and Libertinism; but have been constantly employed in promoting the public Good, and thereby, in the truest Sense, dedicated to the Service of Him who bestowed them. Firm in your Principles, uniform and consistent in your Conduct, equally zealous for the Honour of the Sovereign, and the Welfare of the Community (Objects, which are by no Means incongruous, and ought never to be separated) you have always shone, a bright Example of sincere Loyalty and true Patriotism: admired and beloved by the Good and Worthy; and
censured

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censured by those only, whose *Praise* would be a *Disgrace*. If you have Enemies, they are such as appear by their Actions to be Enemies to their King and Country; Enemies to Government in general, and to that Spirit of Obedience and Submission to the HIGHER POWERS, which the Scriptures so strongly inculcate, and which our excellent Church, in Conformity to them, so strenuously maintains.

The Share you have taken for many Years in our *Parliamentary Debates* has gained you the most deserved Esteem and Applause. Good Sense, strong Reasoning, and manly Eloquence (equally remote from intemperate Heat, and lukewarm Timidity) characterize all your Speeches. A clear Head, and

an honest Heart, appear throughout. While others take Pains to perplex and confound; you, without Art or Labour, instruct and convince. In a late Attack on one Part of our Constitution, how nobly and intrepidly did you stand forth in it's Defence! Your incomparable Vindication of the Rights of the Church must ever endear you to all her faithful Sons, to all true Friends of *sound Doctrine*; particularly to the Members of that *University*, which may boast of having educated a CHRISTIAN ORATOR, whose Genius would have done Honour to the Assemblies of antient *Greece*, or *Rome*.

Nor are your Virtues in *private* Life less eminent and laudable than those which adorn your *public* Character. Sobriety, Temperance, and Chastity,
rarely

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rarely to be found in high Stations, distinguish you in the Midst of a profligate and licentious Age. Without any Affectation of Singularity, you despise the Follies, and detest the Vices, of the Times. Indefatigable in Business, you sparingly indulge yourself even in the most innocent Recreations and Amusements : while *Gaming*, that Bane of Society, whose deadly Poison spreads through all Ranks of People, is your utter Aversion.

Your social Qualities, particularly your cordial Benevolence and warm Attachment to your Friends, ought not to pass unnoticed. No flattering, equivocal Speeches ; no unmeaning Promises, ever come from your Lips. Your Delight is to oblige ; and your Manner of conferring Favours doubles the Obligation. Happy they, who

are honoured with your Intimacy, and enjoy the rational Pleasure of your instructive and entertaining Conversation ! who are admitted to your festive Board ; where they are sure to find Elegance and Plenty, without Luxury or Profusion ; Politeness, without Ceremony ; Cheerfulness, without noisy or dissolute Mirth ; Wit, without Satire ; and perfect Harmony and Good-nature, without Restraint !

Long may you live, a Comfort to your Friends, an Ornament to the Senate, and a Blessing to your Country !

I am,

With the truest Esteem and Respect,

Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate,

9 March, 1772.

faithful, humble Servant,

PETER WALDO.

INTRODUCTION.

OF all the Forms of Prayer that have ever been composed for the Use of Christians, our admirable Liturgy has, from it's first Appearance to this Day, deservedly held the first Rank; and been most highly esteemed and applauded by the best Judges, and wisest Members, not only of our own, but of many other Protestant Churches. For, whether it be considered barely as a Form of rational Devotion, or as a Treasure of sound Doctrine, and an Incentive to the Practice of every Christian Virtue; whether we attend to the Matter it contains, or to the Language in which it is expressed; it's Excellency will appear in every Point of View distinctly, and it must be allowed, upon the Whole, to be a most useful, pious, and masterly Composition. One peculiar Recommendation of it is, that it requires no deep Penetration,

Penetration, no critical Skill, or Learning, to comprehend it ; but every Person, even of the meanest Capacity, with an honest well-disposed Heart, and free from Prejudice, cannot fail to understand and admire it. A great Part of it indeed is taken, Word for Word, from the inspired Writings : and the rest is evidently formed upon the same Plan, and breathes the same Spirit of true Wisdom, and solid Piety. Both the Doctrines and Precepts of our holy Religion shine conspicuously through every Page of it ; so that we may properly be said to read our *Faith*, as well as *Duty*, in our Petitions. How clearly are the grand Doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, Redemption, original Sin, and divine Grace, taught us, not only in the Articles and Creeds, but also in our daily Prayers ! How strongly is the true genuine Spirit of Christian Humility inculcated in every Part of our Service ; particularly in the Confession, and in the first of the three Collects ! What an excellent Compendium of Divinity and Morality is given us in the Litany ! What exalted Notions of the divine Attributes and Perfections do the Psalms and Hymns suggest to us ! How forcibly

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forcibly do they excite our warmest Gratitude, and most devout Adoration!—With a View to illustrate these Points, and to lead Men to a serious and profitable Attention to our Church-Service, I have drawn up the following short Commentary on that Part of it, which is commonly used on Sundays: in which I have avoided all useless Criticisms and Speculations, that tend rather to amuse, than instruct; neither have I so much regarded Elegance of Language, Correctness of Style, or Regularity of Method, as Clearness and Perspicuity, and the Promotion of useful Knowledge, and practical Improvement. To answer this Purpose the more effectually, I shall now address myself to the several Bodies of Men, for whose Use this Work is intended: first, to the Members of the established Church; secondly, to the orthodox Dissenters; and lastly, to the People called Methodists.

As for you, my Brethren, who are not only Protestants, but Members of the purest and best constituted Church in Christendom, let me entreat you often and seriously to reflect on the great Privileges, and Happiness you enjoy. Look on one Side
upon

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upon the thick Darkneſs that overſpreads a large Part of the Chriſtian World; upon the groſs Errors and Abſurdities in Doctrinè, and the flagrant Enormities and Impieties in Practice, which prevail in the Romiſh Communion. View that horrid Monster of Cruelty, the Inquiſition; whereby the faithful Servants, and ſincere Worſhippers, of the God of Love and Mercy are perſecuted, and tortured, with unrelenting Fury, and worſe than beatheniſh Barbarity. Examine their public Worſhip; and ſee what an Heap of Superſtition and Idolatry, of vain Pageantry, and ridiculous Ceremonies, it conſiſts of. Think of their ſhameful Abufe of that moſt ſacred Ordinance of our Religion, the Lord's Supper, by the Introduction of the impious and irrational Doctrinè of Tranſubſtantiation, as well as by their denying the Cup to the Laity, and making a Trade of *private Maſſes*. Think of their Folly and Wickedneſs, in depriving the People of the Uſe of the holy Scriptures, and in performing their Service in an unknown Tongue, in Deſiance of an expreſs Injunction of the Apoſtle, and in Contradiſtion to Reaſon and common Senſe.—Change the Scene, and

take a View, on the other Hand, of the enthusiastic Notions that abound among the Sectaries of various Denominations, and of the vague, unseemly Mode of Worship they pursue. Enter the Meetings of those Men, who pretend to an extraordinary inward Light, and Sanctity of Manners, as well as Purity of Worship; observe their fantastic Gestures, distorted Countenances, and ridiculous Groanings; and hear the unintelligible Jargon of their Harangues. I charitably hope they *mean* well; but surely they *act* most absurdly. With the two Sacraments, they seem to have laid aside their Reason and Understanding*. — Attend the Assemblies of our other Dissenters; and though you may often hear much sound Doctrine, and useful Instruction, yet you cannot but disapprove their Manner of extemporary Praying; in which the Minister alone speaks, while the Congregation is kept in a wearisome Atten-

* I hope these Strictures will not be thought too severe upon the Quakers; who, in other Respects, shew much good Sense and Sagacity, and are in general eminent for their Sobriety, and for their quiet, peaceable Disposition. That such sensible Men should run into so excessive a Degree of Folly and Stupidity in their public Worship, is really astonishing.

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tion, and anxious Suspence, not knowing what they are next to join in. Go into *some* of these Places, and you will be entertained with the Refinements of Deism, or shocked with downright Heresy. In *others* you will hear strange incoherent Discourses, full of Zeal without Knowledge; calculated rather to raise the Passions, than to reform the Heart, and tending more to confound, than instruct, the ignorant and bigotted Hearers. And, what is very amazing, you will hear in none of these Meetings any Portions of the Scriptures read (as is constantly practised among us) by Men who profess themselves most strongly attached to them. Compare now these various Modes of Worship with that established in our Church; and you cannot surely help seeing, and gratefully acknowledging, the great Advantages you enjoy in being Members of it.—But, my dear Friends, what will all these avail us, unless we make the proper Use of them? TO WHOM MUCH IS GIVEN, OF THEM WILL BE MUCH REQUIRED. This divine Rule of Equity will hold universally, and can in no Case be more justly applied than to Us, whom Providence
has

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has distinguished with such peculiar Blessings, and Privileges. If the Light of the glorious Gospel of CHRIST shines so brightly amongst us, how studious should we be to *walk as Children of Light*? to shew the Orthodoxy of our Faith by the Purity of our Manners? If we have every Help and Incitement to a rational Piety and Devotion that can be wished or desired, how great is our Obligation to be truly and cordially pious and devout? If our Service is in every Respect so edifying, so clear, and excellent, how inexcusable are we, if we do not attentively and fervently join in it? if we do not *pray with the Spirit, and pray with the Understanding also*? In this we should take Pattern from the Sectaries, who in general shew a far greater Regard and Attention to their public Worship, than we do to our's. It has, I know, been objected, that the frequent Repetition of the same Service casts a Damp upon the Mind, and takes off that Vigour and Earnestness of Devotion, which attends new and extemporary Praying. But I am certain that a sincere Heart, a steady Faith, and an honest Desire and Endeavour

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to worship God as we ought, will abundantly compensate for this seeming Disadvantage, and render our *reasonable Service* acceptable to Him, and profitable to ourselves. — There is another Obstacle to Devotion, that I fear may be more justly laid to our Charge; which is the careless, hurrying, slovenly Manner, in which some of our Clergy perform divine Service. A sad and real Grievance this, which must offend and shock every serious Christian! But I hope, and am persuaded, that this Practice is far from being general. There are many Divines of our Church as eminent for their Decency and Regularity in discharging this important Part of their Office, as for the Soundness of their Doctrine, and the Holiness of their Lives. And where they fail in this Respect, the Blame be to themselves. A good Christian, in Spite of every external Discouragement, will always feel and cherish such an inward cordial Devotion, as will be well-pleasing to the great Searcher of Hearts; and while he laments the Negligence of the Minister, he will strive the more earnestly to perform his own Part with close Attention, and

and fervent Piety. But the Truth is, that in general the People are much more blameable than the Clergy. The wandering Looks, indecent Gestures, impertinent Whisperings, and heedless Behaviour of every Kind, so observable in all our Churches, are wholly chargeable to the former. And let me add, that such Indignities offered to the Majesty of Heaven, whom we pretend to worship, will admit of no Palliation or Excuse. Let us therefore reform our own Conduct in these Points, before we presume to censure that of our Pastors. For *ourselves* we are answerable, not for *them*.—And with respect to our dissenting Brethren, let us exercise that unfeigned Love and Benevolence, that Friendship and Courtesy, towards them, which our holy Religion so indispensably requires: *in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; and letting our Light so shine before them, that they, seeing our good Works, may be induced to join with us in glorifying our Father which is in Heaven.*

I proceed now to offer a few Words of Advice to that truly valuable and respectable Body of Men, the *orthodox* Dissenters. I

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say, the *orthodox* only; because I would not wish to persuade *Heretics* of any Denomination to come within the Pale of our Church. No partial Believer, no one who calls in Question, or denies, any of the fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith, can join in our Worship without the greatest Folly and Inconsistency, or the grossest Hypocrisy and Prevarication. To you, therefore, the sound and orthodox Professors of our holy Religion, who yet separate yourselves from us, I now address myself; and let me beseech you to take in good Part the Admonition of a Friend, who sincerely esteems and honours you. The many Virtues that shine so eminently in your Lives and Conversations; your strict Piety; your exemplary Observance of the Lord's Day; your punctual Discharge of the several relative Duties in your Families; your Diligence in Business; your Temperance, Chastity, and Sobriety; call aloud for the warmest Commendation. But still, permit me to say, there is *one Thing* wanting to make your Character compleat. What that is, the Scriptures will best inform you. Read them without Prejudice,

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judice, and without any Comment, and see what Arguments and Obligations they contain, not only to Love, and Harmony, and Concord *in general*, but to an Agreement in religious Opinions, and divine Worship, *in particular*. Peruse attentively the Writings of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, especially his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and observe how earnestly he presses and enforces this Unity among Christians. Imagine him to be directing his Discourse to you; and can you forbear crying out, “*Almost thou persuadest me* to return to the Bosom of the Church?”—I should hope you would go farther, and resolve to be *altogether* united to your Fellow-Members of the Body of Christ—You will not, you cannot, say that the Terms of our Communion are *sinful*. Many of you plainly shew you think otherwise, by conforming *occasionally*: and if it is warrantable to conform *sometimes*, it is certainly right, and your bounden Duty, to conform *always*. — If we agree in *Essentials*, let us not differ about *Trifles*. — Give our Liturgy a candid and impartial Reading; try it by the unerring Rule of God’s holy Word;

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and condemn it, if you can. Some small Blemishes you may possibly find out : some few Alterations you may wish to have made (for what *human* Composition can be *faultless* ?) but, upon the whole, you must allow it to be admirably contrived to help Devotion, and to promote sound Faith, and real Holiness of Life. — I grant that you do not offend against the *Laws of the Land* by your Separation from the Church ; but can you say that you do not thereby offend against the *Laws of the Gospel* ? — Is *Schism* no Sin ? and are you wholly free from it ? — Are *Love* and *Concord* no Duties ? and do you practise them in their full Extent ? without any Reserve or Limitation ? — Consider, my dear Friends, that neither the *Act of Toleration*, nor any human Indulgence whatsoever, can in the least take off from the Force and Obligation of the Laws of God ; nor can any Exemption from *worldly* Penalties deliver you from the Guilt, or screen you from the Punishment, of Sin. — But there is another Argument which I beg Leave to submit to your mature and dispassionate Deliberation. Supposing that a Separation

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ration in divine Worship were perfectly innocent, and justifiable in itself; yet is it not productive of very bad Consequences? Does it not evidently obstruct that cordial Love and Harmony, which ought to subsist among Christians?—That it *should not* do so, I readily allow. But, I appeal to yourselves, is it not so *in Fact*? Is there that sincere Affection, Cordiality, Friendship, Courtesy, Affability, and Openness of Behaviour, in our Intercourse together, which our holy Profession requires? Is there not rather a Coldness, a Stiffness, a Shiness, a Reserve; what shall I call it? a *Something* not perfectly Christian and Evangelical. I do not deny that *we* may be faulty in this Respect, as well as *you*. There are, no doubt, severe, uncharitable, censorious Members of the Church; as well as morose, reserved Dissenters. The Conduct of both is highly blameable: and yet I cannot help thinking, that *you* are most to blame, in giving Occasion for it.—Let us therefore, for the Love of God, and for our dear Redeemer's Sake, lay aside all Differences and Distinctions, all Contentions and Animosities; and embracing one another as

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Brethren, let us with one Heart, and with one Mouth, praise and worship our common Lord and Father. Thus united together in one compact Body, we may, through the divine Blessing, successfully repel the Attacks of the Enemy. Our Church, having received so valuable an Acquisition from your joining it, will gain double Strength, and shine with additional Lustre; the great Bulwark of Protestantism, the Terror of Heresy and Infidelity, and the Praise and Glory of the Christian World.

I must now turn to the Methodists; who seem to be attached to no particular Communion, or Form of Worship; but resort to every Place indifferently, where they expect to hear the Word of God preached in it's greatest Purity and Perfection. The Doctrines you hold, I apprehend, agree in the Main with those of our Church; which she derives from the only true Standard of Faith, the holy Scriptures; and which she every where teaches with great Clearness and Energy. Your Zeal for our common Faith is equally *well-known* and praise-worthy. You must therefore, if you are consistent with
yourselfes,

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yourself, approve of our Articles and Liturgy. Why then do you desert us?—The true Reason, perhaps, I have already suggested: “our *Preaching* does not please you.”—To make all just Concessions, and to deal fairly and honestly with you, I must acknowledge that some of our Clergy, the younger ones especially, are greatly deficient in that very material Part of Instruction, the expounding the grand Doctrines of Christianity. They do, not at least, insist upon them so often, and so strenuously, as they ought; but go too much into the *Essay-way* of discoursing. But this, I am certain, will never justify you in causing Schisms and Divisions in the Church. What? because some few Clergymen are remiss and negligent in a Part of *their* Duty, shall we run into a direct Violation of *our's*? into a manifest Breach of the great Law of Love and Unity, so plainly and repeatedly taught and enforced in the sacred Writings?—But suppose we have not all the Instruction from the *Pulpit* we could desire. Are our *Prayers* of no Value? Do they not in a great Measure answer the Purpose of a Sermon? And shall

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we rashly exchange them for the extemporary Effusions of every hot-headed Enthusiast? oftentimes of very ignorant, illiterate Men; and, what is worse, very uncharitable? who indulge an intemperate Warmth and Anger in their Discourses, and scruple not to throw out virulent and scandalous Invectives against the Ministers of the established Church. Is this *Christian*? Is this *edifying*? Is this preaching the Gospel of the meek LAMB OF GOD? —But, let me ask you, are your best and most approved Teachers perfect Patterns of true Christian Preaching? Do they state and expound the Doctrines of our Religion, pure and unmixed with any human Inventions? Do they explain and inculcate the great Duties, and moral Precepts of it? In this Respect, I fear, nay I am convinced, they are greatly wanting. And as to the Doctrines, on which you lay so great a Stress, and for the Sake of hearing which properly expounded you withdraw yourselves from the Assemblies of your Christian Brethren; I am apprehensive that, however firmly you may believe and maintain the grand fundamental Articles of our Faith, you build some unwarrantable

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warrantable Structures of your own upon them, that are attended with very pernicious Consequences.—To instance in the Doctrine of divine Grace. The Efficacy and Necessity of the Influence of the Holy Spirit, to sanctify our Hearts, and enable us to please God in Works of Piety and Goodness, you rightly believe and teach. So far we agree. But you go farther; and by your *Additions* to this most true and comfortable Doctrine, you expose it to Ridicule and Contempt. For you assert, that the Call of a Sinner (that is, in short, of every Man that shall finally attain to Salvation; for all Men are Sinners by Nature) is sudden, instantaneous, sensible, and irresistible; that, instead of *growing in Grace*, as the Scripture teaches, or being *daily renewed* by the Holy Spirit, as our Church most accurately expresses it, the Work is performed all at once; and that we have nothing to do, but to rejoice, and be saved. Does not this Notion drive some into Presumption, and others into Despair; according as their bodily Constitution is strong or weak, and their animal Spirits apt to be elated or depressed?—You represent

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sent Men as mere Machines, wholly acted upon by a superior Power, and incapable of doing any Thing for themselves. But this is by no Means a true State of the Case, according to the Scripture-Doctrine. Our Ability and Sufficiency are of God most undeniably. But it rests with *Us*, whether or no we will make Use of the Aids and Powers He graciously affords us; whether we will, or will not, *receive his Grace in vain*. The Question is not, what God *can* do? but what He *will* do? He can, if He pleases, *raise up Children out of the Stones* of the Street. He can *compel* the vilest Sinners to be obedient and happy. But this is not the Manner in which He deals with the Sons of Adam. He *invites*, but does not *force*, us into his Service. *He hath shewed us what is good*, and enabled us to perform it, so far as is consistent with this State of Frailty and Imperfection. It remains for us to *choose*^b whether we will obey and be saved, or disobey

* This Term is strictly scriptural, and therefore, I hope, unexceptionable.—*I have set before you Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing: therefore CHOOSE Life, that both thou and thy Seed may live.* Deut. xxx. 19. And again: *Ye have CHOSEN you the Lord, to serve him.* Josh. xxiv. 22. So also in the New Testament:

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obey and perish.—*Except the Lord build the House, their Labour is but lost that build it.* But still the Hand of the Workman is required, and God will not perform a Miracle to raise an Edifice without human Labour. — *Except the Lord keep the City, the Watchman waketh but in vain.* Very true: Without the divine Protection the City would be destroyed; but that Protection will not be granted, and must not be expected, without the Concurrence of the Watchman's Care and Vigilance.—It is exactly the same in regard to *Spirituals* ^c. *It is God that worketh in us both to will, and to do, of his good Pleasure*; and without Him we can do nothing. But He requires us to co-operate with Him, and to do *our Part* in working out *our own Salvation*. Phil. ii. 12, 13.—Nay, He urges it as a *Reason, or Motive*, for our so doing. *Work out your own Salvation*, says the Apostle; and then adds, *for it is God that worketh in you, &c.*—As if he had said, Be

^c Testament: CHOOSING rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season. Heb. xi. 25.

^c With respect to *building*, in the *spiritual* Sense, compare Eph. ii. 20, 22, and 1 Pet. ii. 5. with Jude 20. And as to *keeping*, in the same Sense, compare 1 Pet. i. 5. with Jude 21.

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the more earnest and diligent in doing your Duty; *because* the greater Advantages and Assistances you are blessed with, the more inexcusable will be your Neglect of it. *Work it out therefore with Fear and Trembling — with Fear* of offending that gracious and merciful Being, who enables you to *work*. — For *how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation?* — With respect to the Nature and Necessity of good Works, I am sorry to say, that I think you quibble about Words. That you do not really think them necessary to Salvation (as your Enemies would insinuate) I can never believe; because, to do you Justice, you take Pains, in most Instances at least, to practise them. Your Lives in general are regular, sober, virtuous, and exemplary. Besides, to deny the Necessity of good Works, is to deny the Word of God, from the Beginning of the Bible to the End. To mention but one plain Text out of many; WITHOUT HOLINESS NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD; or be saved. Heb. xii. 14. And yet, if we affirm that Obedience (by which we always understand *imperfect* Obedience) is a necessary
Condition

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Condition ^d of Salvation, you are angry, and charge us most uncharitably and unjustly with undervaluing the Merits of our Redeemer, and making him but *half* a Saviour. The Misfortune is, that you will not distinguish between the *meritorious Cause*, and the *Terms or Conditions*, of our Salvation. The former is solely and intirely the all-sufficient Sacrifice, and perfect Obedience, of Christ: the latter are Faith, and the imperfect Services of Man. He *died* for us: we must *live* to Him. We must disclaim all Pretensions to Merit, and with the most unfeigned Humility acknowledge that, *when we have done all we can*, we are *unprofitable* and unworthy *Servants*. But still we must believe that our Obedience, (such as it is, hearty and sincere, though *imperfect*) is *necessary*; and will be *accepted* through the Merits and Mediation of the BELOVED. This is the plain Scrip-

^d It has been objected, that this is not a *scriptural* Phrase. No more are several others, which frequently occur (as this does) in the Writings of the most orthodox Divines, and which neither you nor we scruple to make Use of. *The Merits of Christ*, and *the Satisfaction of Christ*, are Phrases not to be found in Scripture; but the *Doctrines* expressed by them are so plainly taught there, that no reasonable Exception can be made to the Use of the Terms.

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ture-Doctrine, *the Doctrine which is according to Godliness*; expressed in as clear Terms as I can devise. Thus preached Christ, and his Apostles; not only inculcating the general Obligations of Morality, but explaining and enforcing every particular Branch of it, with Clearness and Accuracy. All which would have been intirely useles and unnecessary, were Faith the only Thing required, and Obedience to follow of Course. The Inference to your Teachers (and to every Christian Preacher) is short and plain: GO AND DO YOU LIKEWISE. And as for you, their Followers and Disciples, let me earnestly exhort you, in the Spirit of Love, to return to that Church, you have, without any sufficient Reason, forsaken — to pay more Regard to the infallible Word of God, and less to the Systems of fallible Men — to study the Scriptures whole and intire^e, without Prejudice;

* A *partial View* of the Scriptures has done infinite Mischief, and been a principal Occasion of all the Heresies and false Doctrines, whether relating to Faith or Practice, that have prevailed in the Christian Church. For Example: an Attention to the several Passages in the New Testament, which relate to our Saviour in his *human Nature*, has led many

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judice; attending principally to the plain Doctrines and Precepts they contain, and cautiously meddling with abstruse and uninteresting Speculations.—Lastly, and above all, to be careful to *practise* the Duties of our Religion without any Exception, *adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour* IN ALL THINGS; particularly in the full Exercise of that CHARITY, which is so highly extolled in Scripture, as of superior Excellence even to *Faith*, and *Hope*; which, we are told, will *never fail*; but, being rooted in our Hearts, and cultivated in our Lives here on Earth, will grow up into a never-fading Tree of Love, and produce the Fruits of endless Joy and Happiness, in Heaven.

I shall conclude this introductory Discourse with a Prayer; in which, I trust, all sincere Christians, of every Denomination, will heartily join me.

many to disbelieve and deny his *Divinity*, though no less clearly revealed in other Places without Number. So likewise with regard to *Faith*, and *good Works*; though the Necessity of *both* is so plainly taught us throughout the Bible, yet from considering only those Passages which speak of *one distinctly*, what dangerous Conclusions have been drawn to the Prejudice of *the other*?

“ O Lord,

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“ O Lord, who hast taught us that all our Doings without Charity are nothing worth ; send thy Holy Ghost, and pour into our Hearts that most excellent Gift of Charity, the very Bond of Peace, and of all Virtues ; without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee. And, of thy great Mercy, bring us to those Regions of Bliss and Glory, where no Contentions or Animosities shall have any Place ; but where Love and Harmony, Peace and Concord, shall reign for ever and ever. Grant this, O Father, for thy dear Son's Sake, Jesus Christ our Lord !”

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author thinks it necessary to observe, that this Work was finished before November 1771 : and if, on Account of any subsequent Events, a Remark or two in it should appear less pertinent or seasonable than they were at the Time they were written, he hopes for the Reader's candid and favourable Interpretation.

9 March, 1772.

A

COMMENTARY,

PRACTICAL AND EXPLANATORY,

ON THE

LITURGY, as used on SUNDAYS.

The Sentences and Exhortation.

AS an humble penitent Heart, deeply affected with a Sense of our Unworthiness, and a Sorrow for our Sins, is the first Thing necessary to make our Devotions acceptable to Almighty God; our Church has wisely directed us to begin them with an Expression of our Humility and Penitence, in an humble Confession. And to explain the Nature of this very material and important Branch of Worship, and to shew us how to perform it properly and acceptably, she introduces it with an excellent Exhortation, admirably calculated for our Instruction in these Particulars. Before this, one or more Sentences of Scripture are read to us, very

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properly

properly chosen to prepare us for the solemn Duty we are going to enter upon. As soon as the Minister begins these Sentences, it is usual for the Congregation to stand up: A very decent and proper Custom, no Doubt, if we consider the true Meaning and Intent of it; which is, not to look about, and pay our Respects to our Neighbours (as the Manner of too many is) but to shew our Reverence for the Word of God, now rehearsed to us, in order to awaken us to Repentance. In the next Place, the Exhortation demands our most serious Attention; though, in general, I fear, it is little, if at all, attended to, but looked upon as a mere Matter of Form, not deserving our Notice. But if we will only consider the excellent Instruction it contains, we shall surely think otherwise, and both silently and attentively hearken to this useful and seasonable Introduction to the Service of our Church.—The Minister begins with the courteous apostolical Salutation of “Dearly beloved Brethren:”—He then proceeds—“The Scripture moveth us in sundry Places to acknowledge and confess our manifold Sins and Wickedness”——Many Passages might be cited

cited to this Purpose. I shall only mention two or three of the most remarkable.—*I acknowledged my Sin unto Thee, says holy David, and mine Iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my Transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the Iniquity of my Sin.* Ps. xxxii. 5. *He that covereth his Sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have Mercy.* Prov. xxviii. 13. *If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us. If we confess our Sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.* 1 John i. 8, 9.— Besides these Passages, you will find many others throughout the Bible, strongly enforcing the Necessity of Humiliation and Confession; as well as many striking Instances of the due Performance of these Duties, some of which I beg Leave to refer you to — 1 Kings viii. 46, &c. — Ezra ix. 6, &c. — Nehemiah i. 5. &c. — the latter Part of the Book of Job — the penitential Psalms of David, particularly the 51st. — Is. lxiv. 6. — and sundry Passages in the Writings of the Prophets.— But to go on with the Exhortation: “ and that we should

not dissemble nor cloak them before the Face of Almighty God, our heavenly Father." To hide our Sins from Him indeed is impossible : for his Knowledge, like his other Perfections, is infinite. *His Eyes are upon the Ways of Man, and He seeth all his Goings.* Job xxxiv. 21.—The inmost Recesses of our Hearts are as open to Him as our outward Actions. In vain, therefore, would we dissemble or cloak our Sins before Him : to attempt it, is the most shocking Impiety. We may impose upon Men ; nay, we may impose upon ourselves : but God we cannot deceive ; He is not to be *mocked*. But barely to confess our Sins to Him, is by no means sufficient : in order to do it acceptably and effectually, we are exhorted to " confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient, Heart." The Service of our *Lips alone* will never please God, if our *Hearts are far from Him*. Our Confession, as well as every other Part of our Worship, must proceed from the Heart, the Seat of all true Piety and Devotion. And first it must be " humble and lowly : " deeply impressed with a Sense of our natural Vileness and Propensity to Sin, and of our utter
Inability

Inability to obey God, or offer unto Him any acceptable Service, without the gracious Assistance of his Holy Spirit. In the next Place it must be “penitent;” that is, filled with the sincerest Sorrow and Remorse for our manifold Transgressions; for our base Ingratitude to our merciful Creator, our supreme Lord, and gracious Benefactor.—It must also be “obedient;” that is, truly disposed, and firmly resolved, to amend what is amiss, to forsake all Sin and Wickedness, and from henceforth to serve God *in true Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of our Life*.—Thus must our Hearts be prepared when we confess our Sins to our heavenly Father, “to the End that we may obtain Forgiveness of the same by his infinite Goodness and Mercy,” vouchsafed us through Christ Jesus, our blessed Redeemer, our only Mediator and Advocate.—“And although we ought *at all Times* humbly to acknowledge our Sins before God”—our Humiliation and Confession are not to be confined to the Church, any more than to the Closet; not to any particular Times or Places; but to be exercised, more or less, *at all Times and in all*

Places. Not that we are always to be employed in Acts of religious Worship ; but this I am certain of, that we should always be disposed and prepared for them. In order to perform our Devotions properly, we must be *habitually* devout ; that is, we must keep up a constant Sense of God and our Duty towards Him, and endeavour to bring our Minds into such an happy Frame and Temper, as to be able to check the first Motions to Sin, and to make it our Delight to serve God in every Instance of Obedience. Religious Meditations, when we are once accustomed to them, will be as pleasing as they are useful ; will give us a true Relish of all the Comforts and Blessings of this Life, will greatly alleviate its Sorrows and Miseries, and, above all, will afford us a Foretaste of the Joys and Happiness of Heaven. As to the frequent Practice of private Humiliation and Confession, the Benefits of it will be unspeakably great, as it will check all Tendency to spiritual Pride and Presumption, and be the best Means of preventing any Habit of Sin from getting the Dominion over us : And there is this peculiar Advantage

tage in it, that in our Retirements we can look calmly and attentively into our Hearts, and examine our Dispositions and Actions more thoroughly and minutely, than we can in public. — But “although we ought *at all Times* humbly to acknowledge our Sins before God, yet ought we *most chiefly* so to do, when we assemble and meet together” in our Places of religious Worship, for the following Purposes: First, “to render Thanks for the great Benefits we have received at his Hands.”—Numberless are the Blessings and Favours that our gracious and merciful God bestows on us, his unworthy Creatures. *In him we live, move, and have our Being.* As he first gave us Life, so by his watchful Care and Providence he continually preserves it. To Him we owe all that we enjoy here, and all that we hope for hereafter. By Him we are rescued from the Slavery of Sin and Satan, redeemed from Death and Misery, and made capable of eternal Life and Glory. *What then shall we render unto the Lord for all his Benefits towards us?* Surely the least we can do is, to offer *Him the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving*, to praise Him for his Goodness, and

exalt Him in the Congregation of the People.
 This, therefore, is one very material End of our meeting together in our religious Assemblies, and is admirably answered in the Liturgy of our Church by the many Expressions of Praise and Gratitude it contains, and particularly by the general Thanksgiving, which will hereafter be considered. The second End of our assembling is, “to set forth his most worthy Praise.” As *Thanksgiving* seems to relate more immediately to the Actions of God, wherein we are particularly interested, so the “setting forth his Praise,” I apprehend, is meant to extend farther, and to include all the transcendent Excellencies of his Nature, and all the *Wonders of his Love*, displayed throughout the Universe, whether we are directly affected by them or not. Of this *disinterested* Kind of Adoration (if I may be allowed the Expression) we have a remarkable Instance in the Hymn which the holy Angels sang at our Saviour’s Birth; wherein they joyfully celebrated the Mercies in which they had no particular Concern themselves, and gave *Glory to God*, for shewing his *Good-will*, not to
Angels,

Angels, but to Men. Indeed, every Attribute of the divine Nature, every Instance of his Power and Wisdom, every Dispensation of his Providence, every Act of his Goodness, deserves to be admired and adored by *all his Creatures.* Let us therefore *praise the Lord: for it is good to sing Praises unto our God; for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely.* Let us make it our frequent Employment and Delight here *on Earth*, as it will be our constant Employment, and constitute the principal Part of our Happiness hereafter *in Heaven.*—3dly. We come “to hear his most holy Word” read to us in the Lessons, and other Portions of Scripture (most judiciously chosen for our Edification) and expounded in the Sermon. Among the many Blessings we of this Nation enjoy, it is none of the least, that we have free Access to the sacred Oracles of God, can read them ourselves, as well as hear them explained by our Teachers; a Privilege denied to the Members of the Church of Rome, by *their* Clergy, who, with no less Policy than Wickedness, keep the People in profound Ignorance, *loving Darkeness rather than Light, because their*
Deeds

Deeds are evil. But let us always remember, that it will be of no Use to us, to have the Word of God open to us, unless we read and hear it with the most diligent Care and Attention, and endeavour to improve by it, by informing our Understandings, and regulating our Lives and Actions by that unerring Rule of Faith and Practice. How careful should the Clergy be to instruct their Flock from these Treasures of true Knowledge and Wisdom, and how attentive ought the People to be to their Instructions!—The last End of our coming to Church is, “to ask those Things which are requisite and necessary as well for the Body as the Soul;” not to *inform* God of our Wants (for *He knoweth what Things we have Need of before we ask Him*) but to express our Sense of our intire Dependance on Him, who *giveth us all Things richly to enjoy*; and who has promised, that if we *ask, it shall be given us*; if we *seek, we shall find*; if we *knock, it shall be opened unto us*. Only we must *ask in Faith, nothing wavering*; being assured that God will grant our Petitions, *so far as He sees needful both for our Souls and Bodies*: *provided also, that we lift up clean Hands*
and

and a pure Heart ; always remembering, that *the fervent Prayer of a RIGHTEOUS Man* (but of no other) *availeth much*. How admirably our Liturgy is contrived to answer this particular End of *Supplication*, as well as the other Ends of our assembling together before specified, I hope to make appear in the Sequel.—The Exhortation concludes with the following Direction: “Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present,” (and surely no good Christian would *now* be absent) “to accompany me, with a pure Heart, and humble Voice, unto the Throne of the heavenly Grace, saying after me.”—Though the *Purity of the Heart* is doubtless the first and principal Thing to be regarded in all our Addresses to the Almighty, yet the proper Regulation of the *Voice* is by no Means to be neglected. Indeed an *humble, lowly Heart* will naturally produce a *low and humble Voice*; such as becomes sinful Creatures, when confessing their Sins, or offering up their Prayers to their great Creator. How shockingly indecent then (to say no worse) is that Custom, too common amongst us, of bawling and roaring out

out the Confession, and other Parts of the Service, as if we thought we should be heard for our *loud speaking* ! *— As our Minds and Voices, so the Posture of our Bodies likewise, should be as humble and lowly as possible ; and none certainly can be so proper, both in the Confession and in all our Prayers, as what our Church prescribes, that of kneeling. We scruple not to use this Posture to our *earthly* Princes and Governors, when we have offended them, and sue for Pardon ; how then dare we refuse it to the *Majesty of Heaven*, against whom we have all rebelled, when we supplicate his Mercy and Forgiveness, on which our everlasting Happiness intirely depends ?

* A strange Custom prevails in many of our Country-Churches, especially where the new Mode of Psalm-singing has been introduced, of making the Responses in a Sort of chanting Tone ; which is not only very improper in itself (where there is no Choir) but greatly confounds the rest of the Congregation, and distresses the Minister, who must either make a long Pause after every Sentence, or else begin the next, before the Mock-Chanters have finished their Part. What a Pity it is that our Clergy do not put a Stop to this indecent Piece of Affectation !

*A general Confession to be said of the whole
Congregation after the Minister, all kneel-
ing.*

“Almighty and most merciful Father!”
—Of all the Attributes of God, there are
none so proper for our Contemplation, when
we are about to confess our Sins unto Him,
as his Omnipotence and Goodness. The for-
mer fills us with a reverential Awe and holy
Fear; the latter with a filial Love, a reviv-
ing Hope, and humble Confidence. For as
his Power, so his Goodness, is infinite. As
He is *able* to inflict on us the Punishment
which our Sins deserve, so He is no less *will-
ing* to save, and ready to forgive us, if by
heartly Repentance and true Faith we become
fit Objects of his Mercy. We also invoke
Him by the endearing Appellation of *Father*
(according to the Direction given us by our
Lord in his Prayer) thereby considering Him
as the Author and Preserver of our Being,
and above all as our Father by *Redemption*,
having *begotten us again unto a lively Hope in
Christ Jesus, and made us accepted in the Be-
loved.*—

loved.——Having thus invoked our heavenly Father, we begin our Confession by a general Acknowledgment of our having deviated from his holy Ways. “We have erred and “strayed from thy Ways like lost Sheep.” So says the Psalmist; *I have gone astray like a lost Sheep.* Ps. cxix. 176. And the Prophet Isaiah; *All we like Sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own Way.* Is. liii. 6. Thus are we taught to confess, in the inspired Language, our general Departure from our Duty, and to view ourselves in the Light of *lost Sheep*, continually straying from the GREAT SHEPHERD of our Souls; whose tender Care and Watchfulness over us are frequently represented in holy Scripture under this beautiful and affecting Image—*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.—He maketh me to lie down in green Pastures: He leadeth me beside the still Waters: He restoreth my Soul: He leadeth me in the Paths of Righteousness for his Name's Sake.* Ps. xxiii. 1, 2, 3. *He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd.* Is. xl. 11.—And our Saviour says: *I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth his Life for the Sheep.* John x. 11.—
“ We

“ We have followed too much the Devices and Desires of our own Hearts”—of those Hearts, which, if we believe the Scripture (however mortifying it may be to human Pride) we must own to be by Nature *deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked*. Jer. xvii. 9. — out of which, our Saviour tells us, *proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, false Witness, Blasphemies*. Mat. xv. 19. If we consider attentively these two first Sentences in the Confession, there seems to be a very just and striking Contrast intended by them, which I shall endeavour to illustrate by the following short Paraphrase — We have erred and strayed from *thy Ways*, O Lord, from that Way which *leadeth to Life eternal*; and have wandered in *our own Ways*, in that *broad Path*, which *leadeth to Destruction* — We have left Thee, the good Shepherd, the only true Guide; and have followed those false Guides, Satan, and our own corrupt Hearts — We have forsaken the *Wisdom* that *descendeth from above*; and have pursued *that*, which is *earthly, sensual, devilish*. Again — “ We have offended against thy holy Laws” — Here lies the Essence and Malignity

nity of Sin ; not in opposing the moral Fitness of Things, in not attending to the native Beauty of Virtue and Deformity of Vice, or in neglecting the dark and obscure Notices of natural Religion (on which Points some philosophical Divines are apt to lay too great a Stress) but in offending against the plain, positive, revealed Will of God. This it is, the Scripture tells us, that makes *Sin become exceeding sinful. Where no Law is, there is no Transgression* ; and the clearer the Law is, the greater certainly is the Crime of transgressing it. Indeed no Man ever lived, that had not some Notices of the divine Will, from the Suggestions of Conscience, or the Help of Tradition ; so that *all* were, in some Sense, *without Excuse* for their Sins. But much more inexcusable are we Christians, if we continue in Sin, after the *Wrath of God* has been so clearly and plainly *revealed from Heaven against it*. We cannot plead *Ignorance* of our Duty ; for it is set forth to us in the clearest Terms imaginable, throughout the Bible. Neither can we plead *Inability* to perform it ; for however unable we may be of ourselves *to do any Thing as of ourselves*, yet

yet we can *do all Things through Christ that strengtheneth us*. His Holy Spirit is abundantly sufficient for us; and it is intirely our own Fault, if we do not obtain it.—Having thus confessed our Sinfulness *in general*, we proceed to lament it under the two distinct Heads of Sins of *Omission*, and of *Commission*; of Duties *omitted*, and Offences *committed* against the divine Majesty.—“We have left undone those Things, which we ought to have done; and we have done those Things, which we ought not to have done.”—The several Instances of Duties to be performed, and of Sins to be avoided, I shall not here enumerate, as they will come to be considered more properly under the ten Commandments, and occasionally in other Parts of this Work. Suffice it to observe at present, that *in many Things we offend all*; and what particular Offences every Man has been guilty of, his own Conscience will best inform him. Presumptuous and deliberate Sins are certainly of the deepest Dye, and should be lamented with the greatest Contrition. The frequent Repetition of *any* Sin is also a very great Aggravation of it, and should lead us to a pecu-

liar Earnestness of Sorrow, and a more than ordinary Care to avoid it for the future. What shall we say then to that great Sin of *Omission*, that Sin so truly presumptuous and deliberate, and so often repeated, of refusing to receive the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? What an Absurdity, what a Mockery of God, is it, to confess, and pretend to be sorry, that "we have left undone those Things which we ought to have done;" when at the same Time we are obstinately determined still to leave undone that most important and essential Duty, so expressly commanded us by our blessed Redeemer?—Having now, in a Variety of Expressions, confessed our manifold Sins and Wickedness, we in the last Place bewail the sad Corruption and Depravity of our Nature, whence they all proceed; humbly acknowledging, that "there is no Health in us"—that *the whole Head is sick, and the whole Heart faint*. The Scripture Doctrine of *Original Sin* (as our Church calls it) is extremely plain and clear †. *Behold*, says David, *I was shapen in Iniquity*:

† The following Extract from a very elegant Work, entitled

Iniquity: and in Sin did my Mother conceive me. Pf. li. 5. To the same Purpose there are many other Passages both in the Old and New Testament, particularly in the Epistle to the Romans: And what Scripture thus teaches, Experience sadly confirms. Let us look into the World, let us look into our-

titled *CLIO, or a Discourse on Taste*, will, I flatter myself, not be unacceptable to the Reader.—

—“ The Christian Religion takes the Fall of Man, and its corrupt State, for its Foundation, and strictly requires of us a deep Sense of our natural Wretchedness and Depravity. It is beyond the Power of Thought to form so striking a Picture of human Corruption, as what is exhibited to us by the Death of the Son of God.—We may reflect upon it as long as we please, but the warmest Imagination will never be able to reach, or comprehend, the boundless Iniquity, that this immane Sacrifice suggests.—The fixed Design and Tenor of Revelation is to imbue us with a Sense of our Misery and Vice, to render us lowly and humble in our own Eyes, and to subdue the delusive Idea of our own Excellence and Worth.”—Page 232. 2d. Edit.

And again — “ Nothing discovers the conscious Sense we have of our Wretchedness, more than our Eagerness to get it out of View. The Deist shews his Feeling of Guilt, while he fortifies his sensual Heart with endless Sophisms drawn round it, while he seeks to elude Conscience, by Arguments evidently snatched up by Distress and Despair.”

I wish we had always as much sound Divinity from the Pulpit, as this polite Writer has given us in an Essay, that has no immediate Connection with any religious Subject.

selves, and we shall see sufficient Proofs of this original Corruption; even in our Infancy it shews itself in many Instances of Obstinacy and Perverseness; and as we grow up, it increases with our Years; and unless timely checked by our utmost Care and Diligence (through the Assistance of divine Grace) produces Habits of all Manner of Iniquity. Let the proud Deist boast of the Dignity of his Nature, the Sufficiency of his Reason, and the Excellency of his moral Attainments; but let us Christians not be ashamed to own our Misery and our Guilt;—that our Understandings are darkened, our Wills corrupted, and our whole Nature depraved; then may we apply to the Physician of our Souls for the Succours of his Grace, which alone can help and relieve us. —“ But Thou, O Lord, have Mercy upon us, miserable Offenders”— In this Petition, like the Publican in the Gospel, deeply sensible of our Sins, we implore the divine Mercy *in general*.— In the two following ones we are more *particular*: —And first; “ Spare Thou them, O God, which confess their Faults.” Here we humbly sue for Pardon, in Consequence of our
 hearty

heartly Confession, and sincere Humiliation. We do not presume to have any Claim or Title to his Forgiveness from any Thing we can do, much less from a bare Confession of our Sins, be it ever so sincere : We only mention this as the first Step towards that thorough Repentance, which is the Condition absolutely required of us, in order to obtain Mercy.—As in this Petition we pray to be delivered from the *Punishment*, so in the next we desire to be rescued from the Power and Dominion, of Sin.—“ Restore Thou them that are penitent : ” — “ Restore us, gracious Lord, to the Light that Sin has deprived us of, and to thy Favour, which we have justly forfeited by our numberless Transgressions : Restore the Faculties of our Minds, our Reason, our Understandings, our Wills, from their present depraved State, to some Degree of that Perfection for which they were originally designed : Restore both our Souls and Bodies from being Instruments of Sin, to be Instruments of Holiness, and of promoting thy Glory.” — Not that we are to expect an intire Renovation of our Nature to its primitive Purity in this Life ; (for, as our Church justly teaches,

the Infection derived to us from our first Parents will remain, in some Sort, “ even in them that are regenerated”) but we may expect, and humbly pray for, such a Change in it, as may make us *meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light* ; in which blessed State alone we shall be perfectly free from Sin, and perfectly happy. To qualify ourselves for this Consummation of Bliss and Glory, we must be constant and diligent in our Application to God for his Grace, as well as in our own hearty Endeavours, to purify the Corruption of our Nature, and to *cleanse ourselves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the Fear of God.*—And if we are truly *penitent*, (as we profess to be in the Petition now before us) that is, heartily sorry for our Sins, and fully resolved to forsake them ; we may then hope that God will graciously *restore* us, in the Sense above-mentioned : provided we address Him, *in full Assurance of Faith*, in the Words following : “ According to thy Promises declared unto Mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord.” For through HIM alone we can have Access unto the Father ; and all our Pe-
titions

titions must be offered up *in his Name*, if we expect to be heard. We must not build our Hopes of Pardon and Mercy on any abstracted Notions, or Deductions of Reason, concerning the divine Goodness; but intirely on his gracious Promises, *declared and revealed* to us in the Gospel; which *in JESUS CHRIST are YEA, and in Him AMEN.* 2 Cor. i. 20; that is, infallibly sure and certain.—

“And grant, O most merciful Father, for his Sake” (for the Sake of his Merits, and through his Mediation) “that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober Life.”

“Enable us, by the Help of thy Grace, to live henceforth *as becomes the Gospel of Christ, adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things.*”—To live *soberly, righteously, and godly*, is a Scripture Expression, (taken from St. Paul’s Epistle to Titus, ii. 12.) intended, I presume, to point out the general Division of our Duty into three Branches, as it respects God, our Neighbour, and ourselves: And unless we perform it, to the utmost of our Abilities, in all these Particulars, that is, unless our Obedience be *universal*, to all the Precepts of the Gospel without Excep-

tion, our Confessions and Prayers will signify nothing; but will only tend to aggravate our Guilt, and encrease our Condemnation. — Having now finished our Supplications for Pardon, and Grace, we conclude with expressing the *End* of our offering them up; to wit, the promoting of God's Honour and Glory: "To the Glory of thy holy Name." Strictly and properly speaking, the Glory of God is in itself perfect and complete, and absolutely independent of all created Beings: Not all the Adoration and Obedience of the highest Angels, much less the imperfect Services or Praises of sinful Men, can make any Addition to the Glory of the great Creator; neither can their Disobedience diminish or detract from it; but the *Manifestation* of his Glory does, in some Sense, depend on the willing Obedience of rational Creatures; on the right Use they make of the Faculties He endows them with, and on their grateful Return for all his undeserved Bounty and Goodness: For so God himself is pleased to assure us: *Whoso offereth Praise, glorifieth me.* Ps. l. 23.— and to offer it acceptably, it must be *not with our Lips only, but in our Lives.*

For,

For, as it follows in the Psalm now referred to, *To him that ordereth HIS CONVERSATION aright, will I shew the Salvation of God.* The Glory of God, therefore, should be the End of all our Actions: *Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.* 1 Cor. x. 31. Not that we are forbidden to have any View to our own Happiness; (for even of Moses it is recorded, with seeming Approbation, that *He had Respect unto the RECOMPENCE of the Reward.* Heb. xi. 26; and of our blessed Saviour himself, that *for the Joy that was set before him, he endured the Cross.* Heb. xii. 2.) but the Truth is, that our Happiness, and the Glory of God, should be considered by us in one Point of View, as inseparably connected; since our promoting the one will infallibly secure us the other.—For if we make the Advancement of his Glory the constant and ultimate End of all our Actions *here*, we shall not fail to receive from Him a *Crown of Glory hereafter*; even that *Crown of Life*, that *fadeth not away*, which *the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.* Jam. i. 12.

—Thus ends this excellent Confession;
after

after which, as well as after all our Prayers, we are directed to say "Amen!" or, So be it!

The Absolution, or Remission of Sins, to be pronounced by the Priest alone, standing; the People still kneeling.

There is no Part of the Church-Service, perhaps, that is less understood, or attended to, and consequently that wants more to be explained, than the Absolution: And this, I conceive, is not so much owing to any real Difficulty or Obscurity in the Thing itself, as to our Carelessness, or Prejudices; in not thinking at all, or in thinking very absurdly concerning it: For while some Persons have carried their Notions of the Dignity of the Christian Priesthood, and of their Authority in this particular Branch of their Office, much too high; others have degraded them as much too low; while some have profanely ascribed to the Priest an absolute or discretionary Power of forgiving Sins (which is the Prerogative of God only) others have denied him any Power at all in proclaiming the divine

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Forgiveness: While some have considered the Absolution he pronounces, as *certainly* conveying a Pardon; others have looked upon it as nothing more than an empty Declaration, a mere insignificant Form or Ceremony, not worth attending to.—The Church of Rome has run into the former Extreme; in which she has grossly erred; and that, not merely in a Matter of Speculation, but in a Doctrine greatly affecting Christian Practice; and, as she has interpreted it, subversive of all true Virtue and Holiness. For while She teaches, that Contrition and Confession to the Priest entitle Men to Absolution, and that Absolution is fully and certainly effectual to their Pardon; what is this in Effect, but encouraging them to *continue in Sin, that Grace may abound?* to rest in a bare formal, periodical, Confession; and so to go on in a continual Circle of sinning, and repenting, falsely so called?—Some Protestant Divines, it must be owned, have inclined, or seemed at least to incline, too much to this Doctrine of the Papists; and though they have not run such Lengths, yet, by their indiscreet Expressions on this Subject, have given Countenance

tenance to some very dangerous Notions relating to it : While others, and perhaps the greater Part, have gone hastily into the contrary Extreme, and have disclaimed that Authority, and renounced those Privileges, with which Christ has invested them for the Good of his Church. This latter Extreme, I grant, is not of so dangerous Consequence as the other ; but in so plain a Case (as to every unprejudiced Person this, I think, must appear) why should we run into either ?—Our Church has wisely guarded against both Errors in the Absolution now before us ; which is formed upon the only true Foundation, the unerring Word of God, to which it is in every Respect perfectly agreeable ; as I hope to make appear to you very clearly in the following Observations :—It is called, “ The Absolution, or Remission of Sins,”—that is, a Declaration, and Assurance of God’s Forgiveness, on certain Conditions to be performed by us,—and it is “ to be pronounced by the PRIEST,” as God’s commissioned Officer or Herald ; it being a peculiar Part of his high Office : for which Reason a Deacon, when he officiates, is never to use it, but is to offer
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up some short Prayer in its Stead. It is also to be pronounced by the Priest “alone,” (not by the People and him jointly) “standing;” this being a Posture most suitable to the Character he bears, and the Authority by which he speaks:—“the People still kneeling;” to express their profound Humility and Reverence to their great Creator, whose gracious Message of Pardon they are to receive from the Mouth of his Priest; and likewise, to be in a proper Posture for Prayer, to which they are now directed.—The Absolution consists of two distinct Parts: First, a general Declaration of the Mercy of God to returning Sinners, and an Assurance of his Pardon to us, on Condition of our true Faith, and hearty Repentance: And, secondly, an Admonition to us, to implore the Assistance of his Holy Spirit, in order to enable us to perform those Conditions, and thereby to render this Pardon effectual to our eternal Salvation. Let us consider each Part distinctly:—And first, “Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he may turn from his Wickedness and live; and hath given Power
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and Commandment to his Ministers to declare and pronounce to his People, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their Sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel."—Our Church begins this Absolution, as the Apostles do some of their Epistles, by representing Almighty God to us under the Character of "*the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*"—and in Him, *the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort.* 2 Cor. i. 3. And nothing surely can be more proper for humble Penitents, after having confessed their Sins to God, than to consider Him as the Fountain of all Goodness, derived to them through the Merits of his blessed Son; *Knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth to Repentance.* Rom. ii. 4. The Foundation of our Hope and Confidence being thus laid in Him, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*; we then consider the Almighty, as desiring not the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he may turn from his Wickedness and live:"—*For I have no Pleasure in the Death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.* Ezek.

xviii. 32.—And St. Peter assures us, that *the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance.* 2 Pet. iii. 9. Though the Purity of his Nature is irreconcilable to Sin, and his Justice demands Punishment; yet in his infinite Wisdom and Mercy He has shewn his Hatred of Sin, and satisfied his Justice without punishing the Offender, in that amazing Mystery of our Redemption, wherein *Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.* Ps. lxxxv. 10. Nor has He only provided the Means of our Salvation, but He graciously condescends to invite us to lay hold on them. Behold *the Lamb for the Burnt-offering!* And he calls us to partake of the blessed Sacrifice. By his Word He admonishes, by his Holy Spirit He enables, us to “turn from our Wickedness and live.” And for our farther Comfort and Satisfaction, He “hath given Power and Commandment to his Ministers, to declare and pronounce to his People, being penitent, the Absolution and Remission of their Sins.” —*To preach Repentance and Remission of Sins in the Name of the blessed Jesus, to preach*
CHRIST

CHRIST CRUCIFIED, and to declare his SALVATION, is certainly the first and principal Part of the ministerial Office (would to God it were more attended to!) These are the GOOD TIDINGS, spoken of by the Prophets, Is. lii. 7.—Nahum i. 15. Those GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, which the Angels brought at our Saviour's Birth — that GOSPEL, which our Lord commanded his Apostles to *preach to every Creature*. Mark xvi. 15. — that GOSPEL, which St. Paul calls *the Power of God unto Salvation*, and of which HE was *not ashamed*. Rom. i. 16 — that GOSPEL, which he charges his Disciple Timothy to preach, when he bids him *do the Work of an EVANGELIST*. 2 Tim. iv. 5. For the Words which we translate *good Tidings*, and *Gospel*, are the very same in the Original: So, to *preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad Tidings of good Things*, as cited by St. Paul from the Prophets, Rom. x. 15, is precisely the same, both in the Expression and Meaning, as *to do the Work of an Evangelist*; which Word literally signifies, a Messenger of good News, or of *good Tidings of Good*, as Isaiah expresses it; even of those

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truly good Tidings, which the Prophets foretold, the Angels proclaimed, the Apostles published, and which every Minister of the Gospel is strictly bound, and has solemnly promised, to preach to his Flock. —But, besides this Duty of the Clergy *in general*, there is a peculiar Part of the Priest's Office (as distinguished from that of the inferior Order of Deacons) here referred to, which is the declaring or pronouncing the Absolution; founded on that sacred Commission given by Christ to his Apostles, soon after his Resurrection; when we are told that *He breathed on them, and said unto them; Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever Sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever Sins ye retain, they are retained.* John xx. 22, 23. These Words, according to most Interpreters, contain a *Promise* made to the Apostles of divine Assistance; and a *Power* granted them of remitting, or forgiving Sins*. —How far this Commission,

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* The Communication of the Holy Spirit, which the Apostles now received by our Lord's breathing on them, may be considered merely as an *Appointment* or *Designation* of them

or Power of absolving, extended in their Persons, I shall not enquire; as it would carry me too far from the Point.—It is, I think, sufficient for our present Purpose, to observe, what is plain and undeniable, that both the Assistance they received, and the Power *they* enjoyed, were infinitely superior to those of any succeeding Pastors in the Christian Church. Yet that *some* such Assistance, and *some* such Power, derived from the Apostles, still remain, and will constantly remain, with their Successors in the Ministry, is, I think, very evident; if not from positive Proofs, at least from very clear Deductions, from the holy Scriptures. This is what our Church contends for; in which she is justified by a Variety of the most re-

to the Sacerdotal Office; or as a *Seal* of their Commission: And the Words, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” may be supposed to have no farther Reference. Yet some of the best Commentators look upon them as a Confirmation of the Promise our Saviour had made his Apostles, before his Suffering, of the miraculous Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which was to *guide them into all Truth*. John xvi. 13; and when they were to *receive Power*, in the fullest Manner, to execute their sacred Office. — See Acts i. 8. Pool’s Continuator calls this breathing on them, “an *Earnest* of that more plentiful Effusion,” which they afterwards received.

spectable Authorities, ancient and modern.—
 But, waving any Enquiry into human Writings and Opinions, let us have Recourse to the Fountain of Truth, and see what Light we can derive immediately from thence. Our blessed Lord, in his last Instructions to his Apostles, as recorded by St. Matthew, bids them *go and teach all Nations*, &c. and concludes with these encouraging Words, *Lo! I am with you ALWAYS, even UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD. Amen.* Here, as well as in St. John, we see a Commission granted, and a Promise annexed to it. And what is this Promise? No other certainly than that which is somewhat differently expressed by St. John; namely, of the Presence and Protection of Christ, by the Holy Spirit: which, he assures them in the plainest Words possible, was to be *perpetual*: *I am with you ALWAYS, even unto THE END OF THE WORLD*—not unto the End of *your Lives*, but *unto THE END OF THE WORLD*.—Now if the *Promise* of divine Assistance and Protection made to the Apostles was to extend, in some Degree, to their Successors in all After-Ages, so certainly was the *Com-*
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mission likewise, to which that Promise was annexed. A very material Part of this Commission is the Power of remitting Sins, or *absolving*, mentioned by St. John in the Passage under Consideration. That it is not mentioned by St. Matthew, at the End of his Gospel, is no Objection at all ; as there are many Instances of Things being recorded by one Evangelist, that are omitted by another. Besides, St. Matthew, in another Part of his Gospel, speaks of a Power of *binding and loosing*, (Terms of much the same Import with those used by St. John) granted by Christ, first to St. Peter, and afterwards to the Disciples in general. Matt. xvi. 19. and xviii. 18. Upon the whole then, our Church maintains (appealing to Scripture for the Proof of it) that some Power of absolving or remitting Sins, derived from the Apostles, remains with their Successors in the Ministry ; and accordingly, at the Ordination of Priests, the Words of our Saviour, on which the Power is founded, are solemnly repeated to them by the Bishop, and the Power at the same Time conferred. We do not pretend it is in any Sort a *discretionary*

ary Power of forgiving Sins, (for the Priest has no *Discernment of the Spirits* and Hearts of Men, as the Apostles had †) but a Power of pronouncing authoritatively, in the Name of God, who has committed to the Priest *the Ministry of Reconciliation*, his Pardon and Forgiveness to all true Penitents, and sincere Believers.—That God alone can forgive Sins, that He is the sole Author of all Blessings, spiritual as well as temporal, is undeniable: But that He can declare his gracious Assurance of Pardon, and convey his Blessings to us, by what Means and Instruments he thinks fit, is no less certain. In whatever Way He vouchsafes to do it, it is our Duty humbly and thankfully to receive them; not to dispute his Wisdom in the Choice of those Means and Instruments: For in that Case

† We have a remarkable Instance of this Discernment of the Spirit, or Heart, in the Account of St. Paul's curing the Cripple at Lystra; where it is said that the Apostle *steadfastly beholding him, and PERCEIVING that he had Faith to be healed, said with a loud Voice, Stand upright, &c.* Acts xiv. 9, 10.—May we not likewise infer that he had the same discerning Power in the Case of Agrippa, when he declares so positively to him, — *I KNOW that thou believest?* Acts xxvi. 27.

he that despiseth, despiseth not Man, but God.
 —Would a Rebel, who had received a Promise of his Prince's Pardon, call in Question, or object to, his Manner of conveying it? Would he not rather thankfully accept it from the Officer commissioned to deliver it? And shall sinful Dust and Ashes prescribe Rules to the Great Sovereign of the Universe? And not rather, with the most profound Reverence and Gratitude, receive his Pardon from the Mouth of his Minister, whom He has deputed to pronounce it? Let us then devoutly attend to the Priest thus officiating, while he declares in the Name of God, that "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel." And here let us silently pray to God, that He will confirm, and make this Declaration of his Pardon effectual; which we may be assured He will do, provided we are not wanting in the Conditions required on our Parts, which are Faith and Repentance.—Let us now enquire into the full Meaning and Extent of these Terms, which so often occur in the sacred Writings. Now by Faith, in the Gospel-Sense,

Sense, we are plainly to understand, not a bare speculative Assent to the Truths delivered to us in the Scriptures, but a firm hearty Belief of them; an unfeigned Reliance on the Mercies and Promises of God in Christ Jesus; an intire Trust in his Merits for Pardon and Acceptance; and an humble Dependence on the gracious Aids and Comforts of the Holy Spirit, in the Performance of our Christian Duty.—And by Repentance, as the Word is constantly used in holy Writ, is not meant a bare Sorrow for our Sins, be it ever so sincere; but a thorough Change of the Heart and Affections; a *putting off the old, and putting on the new, Man*; a turning from Sin unto Holiness, and *from the Power of Satan unto God*. Sorrow, properly speaking, is really no Part of Repentance, but rather the *Cause* that produces it. For *godly Sorrow*, says the Apostle, *worketh, or causeth, Repentance*. 2 Cor. vii. 10. That Repentance, therefore, which is necessary to our Forgiveness, is a thorough vital Change both of our Principles and Actions; and has Respect not only to our present Disposition, but chiefly to our future Conduct.—

But how shall we be able to perform these Conditions required to make our Pardon, or Absolution, effectual? How shall we obtain this Faith, or exercise this Repentance, so much insisted on? Not by our own Strength or Efforts certainly; but by the Grace of God preventing and assisting us. "Wherefore," as the Priest admonishes, "let us beseech Him," who is the Giver of all good Things, "to grant us," what by Nature we cannot have, "true Repentance, and his Holy Spirit; that those Things may please Him which we do at this present;" that is, that our present Devotions may be well-pleasing and acceptable to Him; "and" (above all) "that the rest of our Life hereafter may be pure and holy:" For without this actual Reformation, all we now do will signify nothing. All the Benefits of our Confession and Absolution, of our Prayers and Praises, of all the Means of Grace, and Ordinances of the Gospel, will be intirely lost and forfeited, if we return to a Course of Sin and Disobedience. For, *when the Righteous turneth away from his Righteousness, and committeth Iniquity, and doeth according to all the Abominations that*
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the wicked Man doeth, shall he live? All his Righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his Trespas that he hath trespassed, and in his Sin that he hath sinned, IN THEM SHALL HE DIE. Ezek. xviii. 24. And the Gospel every where teaches us, that we must persevere in our Obedience, if we hope to be saved; that we must have our Fruit unto Holiness, in order to attain the End of everlasting Life—That we may be enabled thus to persevere, and to run so as to obtain, we now pray unto God for his Grace; “so that at the last we may come to his eternal Joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—And here let every one devoutly say, “AMEN,”

The Lord's Prayer, and Responses following.

Our blessed Lord, having left us the clearest Rules, as well as the most perfect Pattern, to direct us in the Discharge of every Part of our Duty, has been particularly careful to instruct us in the Nature and Obligation of Prayer. As the true genuine Spirit of Piety and Devotion shines most eminently in his own divine Example, so the Preepts
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He has given us concerning it are no less useful and instructive : and in the Prayer now before us He has furnished us with a complete Form for us to use, and a Model whereby to frame our own Petitions. In this Prayer we address the Almighty not only in the Name, but in the Words, of our gracious Redeemer. In all others there is a Mixture of human Imperfection, so that we can only offer them up as it were *conditionally*, and desire to be heard, as St. Chrysostom well expresses it, *so far* “ as may be most expedient for us :” But in the Lord’s Prayer there is nothing wanting, nothing superfluous ; and we may therefore ask for our Petitions to be granted us without any Scruple or Reserve. This divine Composition, both on Account of it’s own native Excellency, and it’s being necessary to render our other Prayers acceptable, must never be omitted either in our public or private Addresses to the Throne of Grace. Our Church has accordingly introduced it into all her Offices, and into every distinct Part of the public Service ; and has wisely ordered us, whenever it is used, to “ repeat it after the Minister :”

Minister:" which we should always do with the greatest Seriousness and Attention; not running it over hastily (as, alas! it is too often repeated in our Churches †) but saying it slowly and deliberately, and making a decent Pause at the End of every Petition, that we may attend to each, as we go along, distinctly and without Confusion. This excellent Prayer, as it is short, so is it certainly very clear and intelligible, and seems to want but little Explanation. It may, however, be of Use to make a few Remarks on it, once for all, in this Place, as well to prevent any Mistakes concerning the Sense of it, as to draw some practical Inferences from it.—To begin then: "Our Father, which art in Heaven:"—God is our Father by *Nature*, as Creator and Lord of the Universe; who is *above All, and through All, and in us All*; whose *Hands have made us*

† If our Clergy would set the Example of reading the Lord's Prayer slowly and devoutly, the People would follow it of Course. They are obliged to keep Pace with the officiating Minister; and how painful a Task that must be, when he runs over the Service hastily, let any serious Person judge.

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and fashioned us; whose Eyes continually watch over us, and whose never-failing Providence preserves and protects us:—He is moreover our Father by Adoption and Grace; having mercifully restored us to the Right of Sonship which we had forfeited by our Disobedience, and made us again his Children in Christ Jesus: for as many as received Him, to them gave He Power to become the SONS OF GOD, even to them that believe in his Name. John i. 12. And to this End were we redeemed, says the Apostle, that we might receive the ADOPTION of SONS:—And because we are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts, crying, Abba, Father! Gal. iv. 5, 6. And we call him our Father IN HEAVEN, to signify his absolute Supremacy and Dominion over Us; in Contra-distinction to our earthly Parents, who are but Instruments in his Hands: as our Saviour says upon another Occasion, Call no Man your Father upon the Earth; for One is your Father, which is in Heaven. Matt. xxiii. 9; hereby teaching us, that our Obedience to our earthly Superiors must be in all Things subservient to our Duty towards

God,

God. In all Matters that are lawful or indifferent, they are certainly to be followed and obeyed ; but whenever their Commands are contrary to the divine Precepts, the Rule is absolute, *we ought to obey God rather than Men.* Acts v. 29.—In this Sense it is, we must understand those remarkable Words of our Saviour : *If any Man come to me, and HATE not his Father and Mother,—he cannot be my Disciple.* Luke xiv. 26 ; that is, as it is expressed by St. Matthew, *He that LOVETH Father or Mother MORE than me is not worthy of me.* Matt. x. 37. It is to be observed farther, that when God Almighty is spoken of as being in *Heaven*, (which is the constant Language of Scripture) we are not to understand it, as if He were confined to that, or any one, Part of the Universe in particular ; for his Presence is boundless, and we are expressly told, that *the Heaven and Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Him.* 1 Kings, viii. 27. But He is represented to us as being in Heaven, as the peculiar Place of his Residence, where his *Honour dwelleth*, and his Glory is most illustriously displayed. So the *Heaven* is called his THRONE, and
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the *Earth* his FOOTSTOOL ;— that Throne, before which the holy Angels now do him Homage ; in which blessed Regions *the righteous shall shine forth as the Sun, in the KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER.* Matt. xiii. 43. Having thus invoked our heavenly Father, we proceed to offer up our Petitions to Him ; the first of which is, “ Hallowed be thy Name : ” — To *hallow* is an old Word, that signifies properly to *make holy*, or *sanctify* : When applied to God, or to his Name, it must be understood to mean, to honour, or glorify. Accordingly we here pray that the Glory of God may be set forth, and his holy Name honoured, throughout the World, by the Reverence, Worship, and Adoration of all his Creatures ; that the Belief of the true God may prevail universally ; and that we, who do believe in Him, may entertain just and worthy Notions concerning Him, may *give unto the Lord the Glory due unto his Name, and worship the Lord with holy Worship.* Ps. xxix. 2. The proper Inference to be drawn from this Petition is, that we should study above all Things to *sanctify the Lord God in our Hearts,*

Hearts, our Words and Actions; that we should never think or speak of Him but with the most profound Awe and Reverence; and should be careful that the Name of God and his Doctrine be not blasphemed through our Disobedience.—“Thy Kingdom come.”

—In this Petition we pray for the Coming of that blessed Time, foretold both in the Old and New Testament, when *the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.* Is. xi. 9; and when *the Kingdoms of this World shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.* Rev. xi. 15; that is, when the true Religion, and Gospel of Christ, shall be embraced throughout the World: when *the Fulness of the Gentiles shall be come in; and all Israel shall be saved* ||. Rom. xi. 25, 26. We should also

|| That such a Time *will* come, we have the strongest and plainest Assurances imaginable from the *sure Word of Prophecy*, both in the Old and New Testament. That it *may come speedily*, as it must be the hearty Wish, so should it be the constant Prayer, of all good Christians; and this is indisputably the primary Intent of the Petition, “*THY KINGDOM COME.*” But as all Approaches towards the *general Spreading* of the true Faith, or of the Kingdom of the Messiah,

also extend our Thoughts and Prayers still farther; even to that Time, *when the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with Him, and he shall sit upon the Throne of his Glory*: When He, as KING, shall say unto them on his Right-hand, *Come, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the KINGDOM prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* Matt. xxv. 31, 34. AMEN!

EVEN SO COME, LORD JESUS! Now if we pray sincerely and heartily for the Arrival of this happy Time, how careful ought we to be, that we may be found meet and duly qualified to *enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, by doing the Will of our Father which is in Heaven!* For on no other Conditions, our blessed Lord plainly tells us, can we enter

Messiah, are highly desirable, we may, I think, include in this Petition a Desire or Prayer for the Furtherance of the Gospel in part, till that blessed Period shall arrive, when it shall prevail *universally*. In this Respect we may, by God's Grace, and as Instruments in his Hand, contribute to effect what we pray for; if we use our earnest Endeavours to promote and propagate the Faith of Christ; not by Force and Violence (as the Papists do, in direct Opposition to the Example and Command of Him, whom they pretend to serve) but by the SWORD of the SPIRIT, *which is the Word of God.* Eph. vi. 17.

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into it. Matt. vii. 21.—He therefore directs us, in the next Place, to pray to God for his Grace to enable us so to do his Will : “ Thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.”—The plain Meaning of which Petition is, that we and all Mankind may in every Instance obey his Laws, and perform his Will (so far as our imperfect Nature will admit) with the same Readiness and Alacrity, as the Angels, those *Ministers of his that do his Pleasure*, obey Him in Heaven ; that we may imitate them in Holiness *here*, as we hope to be Sharers with them in Happiness *hereafter*. We likewise pray, that we may, through God’s Grace, patiently submit to all the Dispensations of his Providence, be they ever so grievous and afflicting ; not murmuring or repining against the Lord, but crying out with our blessed Saviour, *Not my Will, but thine be done*. Luke xxii. 42.—From this Petition we may infer the Necessity of our frequent and fervent Addresses to the Almighty for the Assistance of his Holy Spirit, and of the Use of all those Means of Grace He has appointed to procure it ; and likewise our Obligation to

the utmost Care and Diligence in enquiring what *the Will of the Lord is*, and regulating our Lives and Conversations according thereto—*working out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling ; since it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.* Phil. ii. 12, 13.—After having *first sought the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness*, and prayed to Him for *spiritual Blessings* ; we are now instructed to apply to Him for such as are *temporal* * ;—“ Give us this Day
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* It ought not to be concealed, that this Petition has been understood, by some very learned and pious Commentators, to include all spiritual good Things, as well as temporal ; the Food of our Souls, as well as of our Bodies : And the Church-Catechism seems to favour this Interpretation. Undoubtedly, the Blessings of the Holy Spirit, to assist, direct, support, and comfort us, are a principal Part of what we pray for in this divine Composition. But as the Petition before this is evidently a Prayer for divine Grace to enable us to do the Will of God, and as in the last Petition we implore the same Almighty Power to strengthen and defend us against Temptation and spiritual Evil, I apprehend that we may safely confine this, for *daily Bread*, to earthly or temporal Blessings. If any Person thinks otherwise, he has certainly very good Authority for his Opinion, and cannot be wrong in praying for *spiritual Food and Sustainance*, which we can neither too often, nor too earnestly, ask for. Our blessed
Lord,

our daily Bread."—The Word "Bread" is used here, as it often is in common Discourse, to signify *Food* in general; and not only Food, but all other Necessaries of Life, of which we pray for a competent Provision.—Hence we should learn to fix in our Minds a deep and humble Sense of our intire Dependance on Almighty God for all the good Things of this World, as well as of the next. High and low, rich and poor, we are all alike beholden to Him for our Life and Preservation: And we should pray to Him *daily* for our Sustenance, as we daily and hourly, nay, every Moment, stand in Need of his providential Care and Support. But our Trust in God is by no Means to exclude or supersede our own Diligence and Industry, which He equally requires of us.—To the poor and needy this is absolutely necessary; nor is it less the Duty of the wealthy and

Lord, when he bids us pray "that God's Will may be done on Earth," shews plainly the Necessity of divine Grace in order to perform it. For if we could *do his Will* by our own natural Strength and Abilities, it would be absurd to pray to Him to *cause* that to be done, which we can do of ourselves, without his Assistance.

affluent, to be well employed, and to labour with their Heads, if not with their Hands, for the public Good. *Having Food and Raiment*, says the Apostle, *let us be therewith content.* 1 Tim. vi. 8. And if God in his great Bounty thinks fit to afford us a larger Portion of earthly Blessings, let us thankfully acknowledge his undeserved Goodness, and use them to his Honour and Glory, and the Relief of our poor Brethren; *laying up in Store for ourselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal Life.* 1 Tim. vi. 19.—The Petition we have been now considering is the only one that seems to relate merely to our Bodies, and the Supply of our temporal Wants.—The next leads us again to the Care of our Souls; and directs us to ask Pardon of God for our manifold Sins and Transgressions. “And forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”—That we are all Sinners, and as such obnoxious to the Wrath and Punishment of Him, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, is a Truth too plain to be disputed.—*The Wages of Sin is Death*, and Misery; which we all deserve,
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and can no otherwise escape, than by humbly imploring the divine Mercy and Pardon, for the Sake of our blessed Redeemer, and for his Sake only. But though we can do nothing ourselves to *merit* Forgiveness, yet there are Conditions required of us, without the Performance of which we shall never obtain it: One of the principal of which is, “that we forgive those that trespass against us.” This our Saviour lays a very particular Stress upon, by annexing it to the Petition for the Pardon of our Sins, and by urging the Necessity of it again, immediately after the Conclusion of this Prayer: *For, says He, if ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.* Matt. vi. 14, 15. These Words are so plain, so full, so strong, and are confirmed by so many other positive Assertions and Injunctions in holy Writ, that it is astonishing how any one that calls himself a Christian can pretend to evade them.—Yet so it is, that too many act as if they really did not believe them; and seem vainly to flatter them-

selves, that *they shall obtain Mercy*, who have *shewed no Mercy*, and be forgiven, though they do not forgive. There is no one Instance of Duty, I believe, in which Men are so apt to deceive themselves : They will *talk of Forgiveness*, and perhaps allow the Equity and Reasonableness of it's being insisted on as a Condition of our obtaining Pardon from God : but then they will either explain it away to nothing, or confine it wholly to Speculation ; while, if they search their Hearts, they will find them to be full of Rancour and Malice ; and if they examine their Actions, they will see them to be directly contrary to their hypocritical Professions. To prevent this fatal Delusion, let us calmly and seriously consider, what it is our Saviour in the most express and positive Terms requires of us : that we FROM OUR HEARTS (sincerely, not superficially) *forgive every one his Brother their Trespases*. Matt. xviii. 35 ; that we *love our Enemies*, *blest them that curse us*, *do good to them that hate us*, *and pray for them which despitefully use us*, *and persecute us*. Matt. v. 44 ; that we *forgive*,

not until seven Times, but until seventy Times seven. Ib, xviii. 22. And let us reflect, that, not only when we receive the holy Sacrament, but whenever we say the Lord's Prayer, we do in effect call down God's Wrath and Vengeance upon us, *we pray for our own DAMNATION*, if we do not heartily and truly forgive those who have offended us, and are not in perfect Love and Charity with all Men.— Having now implored the Pardon of God for our past Transgressions, we proceed to pray to Him against the Power and Dominion of Sin for the future ; and against all the dreadful Consequences attending it, both in this World and the next. “ And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.”—The full Sense of this Petition cannot, I think, be better expressed than in the Words of our excellent Catechism — “ that it will please God to save and defend us in all Dangers ghostly and bodily ;” (that is of our *Souls*, and *Bodies*) “ and that He will keep us from all Sin and Wickedness, and from our ghostly, or *spiritual* Enemy” (the Devil) “ and from everlasting Death.” — And first, we pray to God, that He will

“ not lead us into Temptation.”—Though God indeed *tempteth no Man* to Sin, yet in his infinite Wisdom He has thought fit to place us here in a State of Trial and Probation, where we are liable to many Temptations, which he suffers to assault us, to exercise our Faith, and try our Virtue and Obedience.— In this Sense, God may be said to “ *lead us* into Temptation ;” that is, He *introduces* us to the Trial, or *permits* us to be tempted.— But however weak or insufficient we are of ourselves to go through it, yet HIS GRACE is abundantly *sufficient* for us ; and if we will heartily and fervently pray for it, He has promised that He *will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able ; but will, with the Temptation, also make a Way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.* 1 Cor. x. 13.—Let us therefore *watch and pray* (as our Saviour admonishes his Disciples, Matt. xxvi. 41,) *that we enter not into Temptation* :—Let us be ever on our Guard, —avoiding every Occasion of Sin, with all possible Care and Diligence ; and whenever we are put to the Trial, let us earnestly implore the divine Assistance to carry us safe through

through it, and to enable us so to *fight*, as to *overcome*.— In the latter Part of the Petition, “ deliver us from Evil,” we pray against all Evil, natural and spiritual, temporal and eternal. For whether by the Word EVIL in this Place is meant *Evil in general*, or the EVIL ONE, that is the DEVIL, who is often called by that Name in the New Testament, as being the Author of all Evil ; it amounts to the very same Thing : and if we understand it in the latter Sense (according to many of the best Interpreters) we pray to be delivered from the Power of the Evil one, and from all the Effects of it ; the Evils of this Life, and the Miseries of that which is to come. As Sin is the greatest of all Evils, and the Punishment of it is everlasting, we should have this chiefly in View, when we offer up this Petition ; for the greatest Calamities, that can befall us here, are as nothing in Comparison of the Miseries that await the impenitent Sinner hereafter. From those “ bitter Pains of eternal Death,” to which the Devil and his Angels are condemned, we are mercifully delivered by the Goodness of God in Christ Jesus ; provided
we

we do not forfeit our Title to that Goodness by our Infidelity and Disobedience.— Great as the Power and Malice of the Enemy of our Souls may be, he has no Power to hurt us, but through our own Fault and Negligence. Therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, *be sober, be vigilant ; because your Adversary, the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour : Whom resist steadfast in the Faith — and he will flee from you.* 1 Pet. v. 8, 9.—and Jam. iv. 7.—The petitionary Part of the Prayer being now finished, our Lord directs us to conclude the whole with an Act of Praise and Adoration—“ For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen !” In these Words we acknowledge the absolute Sovereignty and Dominion of God over us, and all his Creatures—To Him we ascribe all Power, both in Heaven and on Earth : *for of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all Things : To Him therefore be Glory for ever. Amen !* Rom. xi. 36.—Or, in the sublime Language of the Revelation ; *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive GLORY and HONOUR, and POWER ; for Thou hast created all Things,*
and

and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created. Rev. iv. 11.—From this Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer we may learn the great Duty of Thankfulness to Almighty God for all the Blessings we enjoy, or hope for—and our consequent Obligation to express the grateful Sense we have of his Goodness in all our Devotions, as well public as private.—Hence too we should learn, *not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly.* Rom. xii. 3; to be thoroughly sensible of our own Inability to serve or please God, and humbly to acknowledge that all our Sufficiency is of HIM, and his good Spirit;—and therefore, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name, be ascribed all Glory and Praise, through Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen!*

After the Lord's Prayer follow four short Sentences, or Responses, to be said while we are still kneeling: Many such occur in the Course of our Church Service, and in some of her occasional Offices: they are mostly taken from the Scriptures, and are very properly adapted to the several Places where they are introduced. And they are
called

called *Responses*, from their being repeated by the Minister and People alternately; the former beginning, and the latter answering, or *responding*.—This is a very ancient Practice of the Christian Church, probably borrowed from that of the Jewish; and is wisely retained by us, as being of great Use to keep up our Attention, and quicken our Devotion. Besides, it makes a pleasing Variety in our Service, and relieves the Mind, after it has been intent on the more solemn Part of continued Prayer. Not that we should abate any thing of our Seriousness or Attention in these Responses, which, being all addressed to God, should therefore be said with the utmost Devotion, and we should be careful so to repeat our Part, as not to interrupt the Minister in his; since that would cause much Confusion, and be quite inconsistent with that Order and Decency, which ought invariably to be observed in every Part of public Worship.—Another Remark I would make is, that though the Minister and the Congregation are to say their Parts *distinctly*, yet each should attend to what the other repeats, and join in Heart,
 though

though not in Voice; the Sense being often not compleat in one Verse, but two or more of them generally forming one intire Sentence or Petition.—Thus much for the Responses in general; and what has been said of them may be applied to the Psalms and Hymns throughout the Service; which are all directed to be repeated alternately.—The four Versicles after the Lord's Prayer, being taken from the penitential Psalms of David, come in very properly in this Place, after we have been confessing our Sins, and humbling ourselves to Almighty God, and before we presume to sing his Praises in the Psalms that follow—"O Lord, open Thou our Lips."—*Answ.* "And our Mouth shall shew forth thy Praise." Ps. li. 15.—Somewhat like this we meet with in the Prophet Hosea: *Take away all Iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the CALVES of our LIPS*; that is, so will we offer our *Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving.* Hosea xiv. 2.—The Meaning of the two Versicles now before us, as applied in this Place, may be expressed, I think, in the following Paraphrase.—"O Lord! we acknowledge ourselves

selves to be unworthy, through our manifold Sins, to offer unto Thee any Sacrifice — When we consider thy Majesty and Holiness, and our own Vileness and Impurity, we dare not even open our Mouths to sing thy Praise — Yet, when we contemplate thy Mercy, and Goodness, we will not despair — Vouchsafe, therefore, gracious Lord, to *open our Lips*, and dispose our Hearts to laud and magnify thy glorious Name — So will we praise Thee with our *whole Heart*, and with *joyful Lips*; *in the Assembly of the Upright, and in the Congregation.* — Then follows; “ O God, make Speed to save us.”

Answ. “ O Lord, make Haste to help us,” — which may be thus paraphrased: — “ Receive and comfort us, O merciful Lord, who are wearied with the Burthen of our Sins — We have *destroyed ourselves* — but *in Thee is our Help*. O *save us* for thy Mercies Sake, and for the Sake of Jesus our Redeemer — *Make Haste, O Lord, to help us* with the gracious Influences of thy Holy Spirit; — quicken and animate our Devotion, and raise our Hearts unto Thee, while we glorify thy holy Name.”

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The Gloria Patri, Hallelujah, and the 95th Psalm.

The Congregation is now directed to stand up, and is to continue standing 'till the Psalms are ended; this being as proper a Posture for us, while we *praise* God, as kneeling is, when we *pray* to Him. Before we begin the Psalms, we use the short Hymn, called the GLORIA PATRI (from the two first Words of it in Latin) in which we acknowledge the Glory of the ETERNAL TRINITY; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; three Persons, but one God, blessed for evermore. And as we here mention them all *distinctly*, so in the next Place we praise them *jointly*, and worship the UNITY—"Praise ye the Lord."—*Answ.* "The Lord's Name be praised."—*Praise ye the Lord*, signifies the same as HALLELUJAH! or ALLELUIA! a Word we find used in the Book of the Revelation, as the Chorus of the heavenly Host, when they sing, SALVATION, AND GLORY, AND HONOUR, AND POWER, UNTO THE LORD OUR GOD. Rev. xix. 1.—And while
we

we thus join the Choir of Angels in praising our common Lord, and afterwards proceed to glorify Him in the Language of the Holy Spirit, should not our Hearts glow within us, with an ardent Zeal and holy Fervor? If we have any Sincerity, or Devotion, can we be inattentive to the solemn Work we are now engaged in?—Yet, alas! how few, how very few among us pay any Regard, or at least a proper Regard, to this Part of the Service! The usual Practice, especially among the higher Class of People, is to look about them, as soon as they stand up at the Gloria Patri, and pay their Respects to such as they had not before taken Notice of;—and this ill-timed Ceremony, this shameful Abuse of the public Worship, commonly lasts 'till towards the finishing of the 95th Psalm; which, being read constantly, is therefore the less attended to.—But, surely, if we will duly consider the very excellent Matter, and useful Instruction, it contains, we shall think it as worthy of our Attention as any of those that follow; and shall, I hope, be convinced, that because, perhaps, we can say it without Book, we are not therefore

fore not to say it at all ; but that we should attend to it carefully, and repeat our Parts in it decently and distinctly. The same Observation is equally applicable to the Gloria Patri ; which, being ordered to be used so often in our Service, is by many not used at all, or else in a very careless slovenly Manner ; whereas it ought always to be repeated with a peculiar Solemnity and Deliberation.

The 95th Psalm, which was composed for the public Service among the Jews, has been constantly used in all the antient Liturgies of the Christian Church, and is accordingly retained in ours ; as it is not only a very proper Introduction to the other Psalms, but also contains Instructions of general Use, both with Respect to public Worship, and the Conduct of our Hearts and Lives. In the five first Verses we are invited to *sing Praises* unto the Lord — to shew our Joy and Thankfulness to Him in “ *Psalms* ” — to glorify Him, who is the GREAT, and only GOD : “ the great King above all Gods.” — For, *as for all the Gods of the Heathen, they are but Idols ; but it is the Lord that made*

the Heavens.—"The Corners of the Earth, and the Strength of the Hills are his also."—The Waters of the great Deep are the Work of his Hands : *He hath set them their Bounds, that they shall not pass. He stilleth the Waves thereof, when they arise.*—From this View of the Power and Glory of God in the Wonders of the Creation, we pass on to contemplate Him more immediately as *our Maker* ;—as the Lord *our God*—in a peculiar Manner—even *the God, of whom cometh Salvation ; the Lord by whom we escape everlasting Death* ;—as our SHEPHERD, under whose Care and Guidance we can want nothing—who leads us beside the Water of Comfort.—We are therefore directed to "*worship*" the Lord, with holy Worship ; to "*fall down and kneel before him.*"—After this sublime and affecting Description of the Almighty, and this earnest Exhortation to Prayer and Praise, the Holy Spirit calls upon us to "*hear his Voice ;*" (or to obey his gracious Invitations) and not to *harden our Hearts*, like the rebellious Israelites ; whose History is recorded for our Admonition, lest we fall after the same Example of Disobedience and

Unbe-

Unbelief.—“TO-DAY, if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts.” Ver. 8. These Words, “*if ye will hear his Voice,*” seem to allude to the preceding Verse, in which we are represented as the *Sheep of God’s Pasture*; and are to be considered as an affectionate Call of our heavenly Shepherd, to follow and obey Him. And we must follow Him “TO-DAY”—that is, instantly, and without Delay; for *behold, now is the accepted Time; behold now is the DAY OF SALVATION.* 2 Cor. vi. 2. If we will now obey his gracious Call, then will He *pour out his Spirit, and make known his Words unto us.* Prov. i. 23.—But if we obstinately reject it, let us hear what follows: *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my Hand, and no Man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my Counsel, and would none of my Reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock, when your Fear cometh.—Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated Knowledge, and did not choose the Fear of the Lord, &c.* Prov. i. 24. &c.—As therefore

we are invited to hear the divine Voice, calling us by his Word, and by his Grace, so are we cautioned against “hardening our Hearts.”—This Phrase is often used in Scripture, to signify a wilful inveterate Obstinacy, a most perverse incorrigible Disposition, a rebellious Spirit; such as possessed the Generality of the Jews in our Saviour’s Time, who, as the Prophet had foretold, *heard, but understood not; and saw, but perceived not*—that is, they were wilfully blind, and ignorant; and their Heart *waxed gross, or was hardened*. See Is. vi. 9—Matt. xiii. 14—and John xii. 40.—One Instance of this Perverseness, among many others, we meet with in them, when they watched our blessed Lord, if He would heal on the Sabbath-Day, in order to accuse Him of a Breach of the Commandment; when He is said to have *looked round about on them with ANGER, being grieved for the HARDNESS OF THEIR HEARTS*. Mark iii. 5.—St. Paul gives us a very full and lively Description of Hard-heartedness, and all its dreadful Consequences, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, Ch. iv. 18, 19—where, speaking of the Gentiles,

tiles, he says, *Having the Understanding darkened, being alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that is in them, because of the BLINDNESS (it should be translated, as in the Margin, the HARDNESS) of their Hearts; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over unto Lasciviousness, to work all Uncleaness with Greediness.* But we cannot have a more striking Example of a stubborn hard-hearted Disposition, than that referred to in the Psalm before us, of the Jews in the Wilderness; which is therefore held out to us as a Warning — “*harden not your Hearts; as in the Provocation, and as in the Day of Temptation in the Wilderness; when your Fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my Works*” — Ver. 8, 9. — The 78th Psalm paints their Rebellion in the strongest Colours; it calls them *a faithless and stubborn Generation* — that kept not the Covenant of God, and would not walk in his Law — but forgot what He had done, and the wonderful Works that He had shewed for them. Ver. 9, 11, 12. — Though they saw his miraculous Works, and experienced his fatherly Care and Protection; and though

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they

they had been wonderfully conducted by Him through the Red Sea, and were now fed with Bread from Heaven, and plentifully supplied with Streams of Water out of the hard Rock ; though they were led by Him *in the Day-time with a Cloud, and all the Night through with a Light of Fire* ; yet *for all this they sinned more against Him, and provoked the most Highest in the Wilderness* ; — they tempted God in their Hearts — they spake against Him — they provoked Him — they grieved Him — and moved the Holy One in *Israël*. — Thus “ forty Years long was He grieved with this Generation, and said ; It is a People that do err in their Hearts, for they have not known my Ways.” Ver. 10. — To *err in their Hearts*, does not here imply a slight involuntary Error (as we sometimes use the Word in common Discourse to signify a Mistake in Judgment) but a wilful Depravity, a corrupt malicious Turn of Mind, such as the Psalmist elsewhere describes, when he says, that they *set not their HEART aright* ; — and that *their HEART was not whole with Him*. Ps. lxxviii. 9, 37. — In like Manner the Word ERROR is used by

by St. Paul, Rom. i. 27, to denote the vilest Impurity; and by St. James, Chap. v. 20, to point out a general Course of Sin, and a total *Departure* from the *Truth*. So likewise the following Expression, “they have not known my Ways,” does not signify an unavoidable *Ignorance*, but a wilful *Blindness*; such as St. Peter speaks of, when he says, *For this they WILLINGLY are ignorant of.* 2 Pet. iii. 5; and St. Paul, on another Occasion, *They did NOT LIKE to retain God in their KNOWLEDGE.* Rom. i. 28. Our blessed Saviour uses the same Sort of Expression to the perverse Jews in his Days, when he upbraids them for *not having known God.* John viii. 55; not speaking of their Ignorance as invincible or excusable, but taxing them with it as in the highest Degree wilful and criminal.—I have now, I hope, sufficiently explained what is meant by that *Hardness of Heart*, against which the Holy Spirit cautions us in this admirable Psalm, from the Example of the rebellious Israelites. It remains only to consider the Consequence mentioned in the last Verse; and to make the Application — “Unto whom

I swear in my Wrath, that they should not enter into my Rest." Ver. 11.—Among many Instances of the Murmuring and Perverseness of the Children of Israël related by Moses, we read, that upon the Report made to them by the Spies, of the promised Land, *they all murmured against Moses and against Aaron; and the whole Congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the Land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this Wilderiness.* Numb. xiv. 2. — *And the Lord said, Because all those Men, which have seen my Glory, and my Miracles which I did in Egypt and in the Wilderiness, and have tempted me now these ten Times, and have not hearkened to my Voice; Surely they shall not see the Land, which I swear unto their Fathers.* Ver. 22, 23.—And again, *As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in my Ears, so will I do to you; your Carcases shall fall in this Wilderiness.* Ver. 28, 29. — And accordingly they all perished; for, as the Apostle says, *they could not enter in because of Unbelief.* Heb. iii. 19.—Now as all these Things happened unto them for Ensamples, and are written for our Admonition, we should not
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consider them as uninteresting Narrations, but should make the Application to ourselves; and be careful to avoid their Sin, if we hope to escape their Punishment. To this End, whenever we repeat the Psalm now under Consideration, we should, if we wish to improve and be edified by it, always make some such Reflections as these that follow:—The Wandering of the Israelites through the Wilderness represents our travelling through this World; their *earthly* Canaan, or promised Land, being a Type or Figure of *Heaven*; of that blessed Country, to which we are all invited, and where, if it be not our own Fault, we may all one Day arrive.—The same divine Providence which once guided and protected *them*, now watches over and defends *us*;—*they did all eat the same spiritual Meat; and did all drink the same spiritual Drink.* 1 Cor. x. 3, 4: the Manna, with which they were miraculously sustained, was an Emblem of the true *Bread of Life*, which came down from Heaven, for the Support of our Souls; and the Water, which they drank out of the Rock, prefigured the Graces of the Holy Spirit, which we receive from

from the true Fountain of Life ; for THAT ROCK WAS CHRIST. Ver. 4 ; — that is, it *represented* Christ.— Now if they, through their Infidelity and Disobedience, notwithstanding all the signal Favours they enjoyed, fell short of the promised Rest, and perished in the Wilderness ; so shall we, who are blessed with still higher Privileges, if we tread in their Steps, most assuredly fail of our *eternal Inheritance* in the heavenly Canaan, and be doomed to everlasting Destruction.— *Take Heed*, therefore, *Brethren*, as the Apostle justly infers, *lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God : But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day ; lest any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin.* Heb. iii. 12, 13.— Let us not rest in a bare speculative Belief, but endeavour to obtain and preserve a lively Faith, and hearty Trust in the Promises of God made to us in the Gospel.— This, and this only, will support us in our Pilgrimage here on Earth, and carry us safe to our eternal Rest in Heaven.— And since true Faith *worketh by Love*, that is, produces the Fruits of Virtue and Holiness,

Holiness, we have a sure and infallible Rule whereby to know if we are *in the Faith*; namely, if we *keep God's Commandments*. On the other Hand, Infidelity and Sin are inseparable; both proceeding from an *evil* or corrupt *Heart*, fatally deluding us with all Manner of *Deceitfulness*, and carrying us on from one Degree of Iniquity to another; 'till *Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth DEATH*, and Misery everlasting.

The Psalms in general.

After the preparatory Psalm, we have been now considering, follow “the Psalms in Order as they are appointed:”—which Order is so contrived, that they may be read through in the daily Service in the Course of a Month, by small Portions appointed for each Morning, and Evening: and for such Persons as attend only on Sundays, they are all gone through in the Year, some oftener, and some seldomer, according as it may happen. — The Use of the Psalms in the public Worship of God has been universally observed in all Ages, both among
Jews

Jews and Christians; and certainly with great Reason; inasmuch as they furnish excellent Matter of Devotion of every Kind, adapted to every State of the Church, and to every Condition of it's several Members. What admirable Forms of Humiliation and Confession, of Prayer and Supplication, of Praise and Thanksgiving, are to be found in these divine Hymns! How many useful Instructions for the Conduct of our Lives; how many Warnings against Sin and Unbelief; how many powerful Incitements to Faith, Hope, and Trust in God's Goodness! On these Accounts they are properly called by the antient Fathers the Marrow or Compendium of Divinity, the Store-house of Devotion, the Instrument of Virtue.—And, no Doubt, the frequent Use of them must be highly pleasing, as well as instructive, to every pious, well-disposed Mind. Yet perhaps, some Doubts may arise, and some Difficulties occur, as to the Propriety of using all the Psalms indiscriminately; since there seem to be, and really are, several Passages in them, which we cannot properly apply to ourselves.

ourselves. In Answer to this Objection, let it be considered, that many of the Psalms are *prophetical*; and these could not be applied by the inspired Author to himself, much less are they applicable to us. When therefore we repeat these, we are only to consider ourselves as reading a Part of the Word of God, the same as if we were reading any Passages in the Prophets; for our Instruction indeed, but not with any View to a personal Application. That there are many Psalms of this prophetical Sort, relating to the Times of the Gospel, is undeniable: for it not only appears very clearly from the Psalms themselves, to every attentive Reader, but it is put out of all Dispute from the Applications that are made of several of them by the Writers of the New Testament. Our blessed Lord tells his Disciples after his Resurrection; *These are the Words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all Things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the PSALMS, concerning me.* Luke xxiv. 44.—Accordingly we find many of the Predictions in the Psalms

Psalms so applied ; particularly in the Acts
 of the Apostles. In the 2d Chapter there
 is a very remarkable one taken from the 16th
 Psalm, relating to our Saviour's Resurrection,
 which St. Peter shews could be in no Sense
 applied to David. Verse 25, 26, 27, 28.—*For*
David, says he, is both dead and buried, and
his Sepulchre is with us unto this Day : There-
fore being a PROPHEET, and knowing that God
had sworn with an Oath to him, that of the
Fruit of his Loins, according to the Flesh,
He would raise up CHRIST to sit on his
Throne : He, seeing this before, spake of the
 RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, *that HIS SOUL*
was not left in Hell, neither HIS FLESH did
see Corruption. Acts ii. 29, 30, 31. It would
 be endless to go through all the prophetical,
 and, as they may properly be called, the evan-
 gelical Passages in the Book of Psalms.
 Those that are applied in the New Testa-
 ment we cannot mistake the Meaning of ;
 and there are many others which we need
 not be at a Loss to understand and apply, if
 we read them with Care and Attention, and
 are at all conversant in the sacred Writings.—
 As to the Curses, or Imprecations, which oc-
cur

cur in several Psalms, particularly in the 109th, they are all prophetical Denunciations of the Wrath and Vengeance of God against the Enemies of Christ, and his Church. Two Passages, one from the 69th, the other from the 109th, relating to the Traitor Judas, are expressly applied to him by the Apostle; Acts i. 20. In all these Psalms, David does not speak as a *private Person*, but as a *Prophet*: so that, though we cannot apply them to ourselves in any Sense (as we may some other Psalms) yet we need no more scruple repeating them, than we need fear reading any other Part of the prophetical Writings. In all Cases, our repeating the Curses of God, as they are recorded in Scripture, or saying Amen to them, when repeated by the Minister, does not imply any uncharitable Wish on our Parts (as some weak Persons vainly imagine) but is only a solemn and pious Acknowledgment of the divine Justice; a Declaration like that of David, *Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are thy Judgments.* Ps. cxix. 137.—With Respect to the penitential and supplicatory Psalms, these, though in some Sense *personal*, and relating

to

to the particular History of David, are yet in a great Measure of *general* Use and Application.—The 51st Psalm is an admirable Pattern of deep Contrition and humble Penitence, and is very fit to be used and copied by every Christian Congregation, and indeed by every private Person: It is accordingly with great Judgment inserted in the Office of Humiliation for the first Day of Lent. And there are several Petitions of various Kinds interspersed throughout most of the Psalms, which a pious Soul may join in with the strictest Propriety. But the more general Design of the Use of the Psalms in our public Worship seems to be, to express our Joy and Thankfulness to Almighty God for all his Mercies, and to celebrate his glorious Perfections, as manifested in the Works of Creation and Providence. Expressions of this Sort are to be met with in great Abundance in most of these divine Compositions; so plain and clear, that they cannot be mistaken; and so truly sublime, that they cannot fail to elevate a Mind, properly disposed to sing the Praises of the great Creator.—In these noble Acts of Adoration

we should all devoutly join; and surely a most delightful and happy Employment it must be to all sincere Christians, thus to extol and magnify that glorious Being, to whom they hope to sing Praises and Alleluias in the Choir of Heaven to all Eternity.

Before I quit this Subject, it may not be improper to say something of *Psalmody*, or *Psalm-singing*; as distinguished from the reading or repeating of them alternately in the first Part of the Service; the singing being usually at the latter End. That this is a very proper and commendable Practice, is most certain. The Psalms, many of them at least, were originally designed to be *sung*, and set to Music; and we read in several Parts of the Old Testament that they were sung accordingly. In the New Testament we are ordered to SING *and make Melody in our Heart*; and to SING, *with Grace in our Hearts, to the Lord*. Eph. v. 19; and Col. iii. 16.—And again; *Is any merry? let him SING PSALMS*. Jam. v. 13.—But however right the Practice may be in itself, it is much to be feared that the Mode of Psalm-singing, which now so generally prevails,

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greatly defeats the good End originally proposed by it ; and tends rather to disturb some, and provoke Laughter among others, than to promote a general Harmony and Devotion. The light, airy Tunes, now in Vogue, especially in our Country-Churches, are certainly very unsuitable to the Solemnity of divine Worship, and must give great Offence to serious and devout Christians. Besides, were they ever so decent and proper, yet it is very unfit and unreasonable that this Part of the Service should be engrossed by a particular Set of Men, to the Exclusion of the far greater Number of the Congregation, as it must necessarily happen, where the new Tunes are introduced. I grant, that all Persons are not disposed, or qualified, to join in Psalm-singing ; yet it cannot be denied that many such there are ; and that these should be *silenced*, as in Effect they are by this new Fashion, is undoubtedly Matter of just Complaint and Resentment.—To strengthen what I say, and to shew that I am not singular in my Opinion, I shall conclude this Article with an Extract from the Charges of the late most worthy and pious Archbishop Secker ;

who,

who, speaking to his Clergy on this Subject, says:—"Where any Knowledge of the *old common Tunes* remains, you should endeavour principally that your Learners may perfect themselves in *these*; that so they may lead and assist the rest of the Congregation, who should always join with them. Or if you *must* admit a Mixture of *new and uncommon Tunes*, it should be no greater than you find yourselves in Prudence absolutely obliged to: Else the Consequence will be, what I fear many of you have experienced, that either one Part of your People will resent being *unjustly silenced*, and this by the Introduction of Tunes often not so good as their former ones, and so your Parishioners will be divided and uneasy; or if they agree to the Change ever so generally, and like it ever so well, yet your select Singers will either be weary in a While of what only Novelty recommended to them, or grow conceited and ungovernable, or die off, or be dispersed; and the Congregation will be left unable to sing in any Manner at all."

The LESSONS.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES, says our blessed Lord to the unbelieving Jews, *for in them ye think that ye have eternal Life.* John v. 39. And so far indeed they thought rightly. But from whom that eternal Life was to come, though plainly pointed out to them both by Moses and the Prophets, of this they were wilfully ignorant.—That *that Life was in the Son of God*, that He who now spake to them was THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE, that He was THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE; this was what they would not see, or did not chuse to acknowledge.—SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES is a Precept equally binding to every Christian; since they, and they only, are *able to make us wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus.* 2 Tim. iii. 15.—For, as the Apostle goes on, *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.* ver. 16.—These Words, as addressed by St. Paul to Timothy, relate only

only to the Writings of the *Old Testament*; but, considered as a general Admonition to all Christians, are certainly no less applicable to those of the *New*.—For they are both equally given by divine Inspiration; in both, as our Church justly observes, “everlasting Life is offered to Mankind by Christ;” and both, taken collectively, contain all Things necessary to Salvation.”—They are *profitable for Doctrine*; that is, they teach us all necessary and useful Knowledge, and instruct us in all true Wisdom—*for Reproof*; they convince us of all our Errors, and remove all our Doubts and Scruples: they are a shining Light to our Understandings, and carry full Evidence and Conviction to the humble and unprejudiced Mind—*for Correction*; they reclaim those who have gone astray, and bring them back to the right Way, that leadeth to Life eternal—*for Instruction in Righteousness*; they give us the fullest and clearest Information in every Part of our Duty, teaching us how to regulate our Hearts, to govern our Words, and direct our Actions, by the Rule of God’s Commandments. The Bible, therefore, being a

perfect and complete Repository of all divine Truths, respecting both our Faith and Practice, how thankful should we be to Almighty God for bestowing on us such an invaluable Treasure; and how diligent in reading and attending to it, and making it the chief and constant Study of our Lives!—Now in order to read it profitably, so as to answer the gracious Purposes of God in giving us free Access to these his *lively Oracles*, the following Rules should be carefully observed.—We must read it with Faith and Humility; with Seriousness and Attention; and with a sincere Desire of being instructed and improved by it.—The first Thing requisite is an humble Sense of our natural Ignorance and Depravity, an intire Trust and Dependance on God for his gracious Instruction and Assistance, and a firm and hearty Faith in his Promises revealed to us in the Gospel. It was for want of this Faith, and of this humble teachable Disposition, that the Jews of old did not receive the Benefits mercifully intended them by God in the Revelations He made to them under the Law: For, as St. Paul writes to the Hebrews, *unto*

*it was the GOSPEL preached, as well as unto them; but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixt with FAITH in them that heard it. Heb. iv. 2. And the same evil Heart of Unbelief, not only among Jews, but among too many who call themselves Christians, has ever been, and still continues to be, the grand Obstacle to a profitable Hearing or Reading of God's holy Word.—Secondly, We must read it with Seriousness and Attention.—A careless and superficial View of the Scriptures will never answer any good Purpose, but will expose us to numberless Errors, and make us liable to be led away from the Truth by the cunning Craftiness of those, who lie in Wait to deceive.—It is true, that the grand fundamental Doctrines and Precepts of our Religion are so clearly revealed to us in the sacred Writings, that (as the Prophet says) *be that runneth may read them*; and to a sincere and unprejudiced Enquirer these great Truths will often appear plain and striking at first Sight:—But the Misfortune is, that few Persons are wholly free from Prejudices of some Kind or other, which are apt to give a*

Bias to their Minds, and never fail to mislead an inconsiderate Reader. — Could we divest ourselves of these, and did we, *as new born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word*, we should most assuredly grow thereby in all spiritual Knowledge, and true Wisdom. — To a Person thus disposed a moderate Degree of Care and Attention would suffice to shew him *the wonderful Things of God's Law*. — Lastly, we should read the Scriptures with a sincere Desire of Instruction and Improvement. — If we read them merely as an historical Narration, and for the Sake of speculative Knowledge and Amusement, we can never reap any Benefit from them. — When Almighty God vouchsafes to speak to us, we may certainly conclude that we are deeply interested in whatever He reveals; and if we do not make the right Use and Application of it, all the Discoveries He affords us, will, like the Abuse of our natural Talents, only tend to increase our Condemnation. — *The engrafted Word* is indeed *able to save our Souls*; but to that End we must *receive it with Meekness and Reverence*, and resolve to be

be DOERS of it, and not *Hearers only*, *deceiving our own Selves*. Jam. i. 22.

What has been said of the Scriptures in general, may be applied to the particular Portions of them that are selected for the Lessons in our Church-Service.—They are chosen with great Judgment, and ought to be most seriously attended to, with such good Dispositions as are above recommended.—And here I must take the Liberty to remind the Clergy of a Part of their Duty, of which too many of them are shamefully negligent; I mean, to read the Lessons, as our Church directs in the Rubric, “distinctly, with an audible Voice, so standing and turning themselves, as they may best be heard of all such as are present.”—A proper Regard to this Direction would, I am persuaded, have an amazing Effect on the Congregation, and prevent that scandalous Inattention to the Word of God, so visible in most of our Churches. It is in a Reader’s Power to excite, if not to command, the Attention of his Hearers; and to make them in a great Measure *understand*, as well as attend. The laying a right Emphasis on a single Word only will often throw
Light

Light on a whole Sentence, and make that intelligible, which would otherwise be obscure. Many of our Divines take no small Pains in delivering their own Compositions to the best Advantage; and so far doubtless they do well. Surely they ought to be at least as careful, nay much more so, in reading the inspired Writings in such a Manner as may most affect their Audience, and answer the great End proposed by them, *the making us WISE UNTO SALVATION*.

The Hymns and Psalms appointed to be used after each Lesson, both at Morning and Evening-Service: And first, the Te Deum.

The wise and pious Compilers of our excellent Liturgy have shewn their Judgment in nothing more, than in that pleasing Variety, wherewith they have diversified the Service; thereby making it equally delightful and edifying. Prayer and Thanksgiving, hearing God's Word and praising his holy Name, follow each other in a proper and natural Succession; and the Mind by this Means is kept intent on the different Parts
of

of Devotion without Languor or Fatigue.—
 The Hymns and Psalms, now to be considered, are admirably adapted to enliven and animate our Affections, and to express our Sentiments of Praise and Gratitude to our great Creator: Of all human Compositions, there is none perhaps better calculated for this Purpose, than that noble and sublime Hymn, called the *Te Deum*, which is commonly used after the First Lesson at Morning-Service: The former Part of it is an Act of Adoration to the ever-blessed Trinity; the latter, a Confession of our Faith in our Redeemer, and an humble Supplication addressed to him in Consequence thereof. We begin by *praising and acknowledging* the great Lord of the Universe, whose transcendent Glory shines throughout every Part of the Creation: The *THREE HOLY*, as revealed to us in Scripture, by the three personal Distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: The Lord God of *SABAOOTH*, that is, of *Hosts*, or *Armies*, who gave Life and Being to all the Inhabitants of Earth and Heaven, and on whom they continually depend for their Preservation, and Support:
 whom

whom Angels and Archangels, "Cherubim and Seraphim" praise and celebrate with never-ceasing Alleluiahs : whom the departed Spirits of those who have died in his Faith and Fear, particularly the glorious Company of the Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs, laud and magnify : and whom "the Holy Church throughout all the World doth acknowledge," and adore. — Thus far this Hymn is a Paraphrase on that sublime Song of the heavenly Host, recorded by the Prophet Isaiah, c. vi. 3. and by Saint John in the Revelation, c. iv. 8. which they sing with unwearied Joy and Rapture to the great Lord of Heaven and Earth. The same is likewise adopted by our Church into her Office for the Communion ; where I believe it is generally repeated with the greatest Seriousness and Devotion. I would only ask, Whether it ought not to be repeated as fervently and devoutly in the TE DEUM ? and if it is not to the last Degree absurd and inconsistent, to attend to it in one Place, and to pass it over slightly and carelessly (as I fear is too often the Case) in another ? — It will not, I hope, be thought an useless or improper Digression,

gression, if I extend this Observation farther, and apply it to the Whole of our Church-Service. The Inconsistency of the Behaviour of many Persons in the different Parts of public Worship is too apparent to escape Notice, and too offensive not to call for Reprehension. — Some, for Instance, will behave with great Decency, and seeming Devotion, during the Time of Prayer ; but shew little or no Regard to the Psalms, the Hymns, and Lessons. Others, when they attend the holy Sacrament, will observe the strictest Decorum and Reverence in their Deportment, and appear to have all the Piety and Fervor of Devotion, which that sacred Ordinance demands. Yet these very Persons, in their Attendance on the common Service, will be careless and negligent, and in many Parts of it wholly inattentive : as if it were not the same divine Being, that is the constant Object of our Worship and Adoration on all Occasions; or as if the Homage we pay to Him in one solemn Office would atone for our Remissness in all the others. — But to return to the Hymn before us — After having paid our Tribute of Praise to the sacred Trinity,

nity, and mentioned each Person distinctly, we address ourselves in the remaining Part to our blessed Saviour *singly*; beginning with that noble Exclamation, "Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ." This Title is given to Him by the inspired Psalmist in the 24th Psalm, which is a plain Prophecy of his Ascension into Heaven: *Lift up your Heads*, says he, *O ye Gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting Doors, and the King of Glory shall come in*—And then follows—*Who is this King of Glory?* THE LORD OF HOSTS, *He is the King of Glory*—Ps. xxiv. 7. 10. It is remarkable that this Title of THE LORD OF HOSTS, which is never bestowed on any but the One Supreme God, is here expressly applied to Christ, as it is also by the Prophet Isaiah (ch. viii. 13. compared with 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. as well as in other Places) even to Him, who is OVER ALL, GOD BLESSED FOR EVER, Rom. ix. 5. and whom Saint Paul elsewhere calls THE LORD OF GLORY, 1 Cor. ii. 8. Indeed the Proofs of his Divinity, in every Part of the Bible, are innumerable; both the Old and New Testament proclaiming Him to be, what this Hymn styles Him, THE
EVER-

EVERLASTING SON OF THE FATHER." From this general Acknowledgment of his Divinity we proceed to consider Him in his State of Humiliation, as GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH: "When Thou tookest upon Thee to deliver Man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's Womb." O amazing Mystery of Love and Goodness, of Humility and Condescension, to come down from the highest Heavens, from the Enjoyment of perfect Bliss and Glory, to take upon Thee our weak and frail Nature, to endure all the Miseries of human Life, and suffer the bitter Pains of a most cruel and ignominious Death! Yet, "Thou didst not abhor," but cheerfully submit to, all this, in order to procure our Deliverance from Death eternal.—We view Him next as having "overcome the Sharpness of Death, and opening the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers." —Having, as our Church expresses it, "by his Death destroyed Death, and by his rising to Life again restored to us everlasting Life," He graciously invites us to believe, obey, and be happy—And now let us behold Him "sitting at the Right-hand of God, in the Glory of the Father;"

“ Father ;” invested with *all Power both in Heaven and in Earth*, and mercifully exercising his Offices of Mediator, Intercessor, and Advocate, for us his unworthy Creatures. — From this State of Exaltation “ we believe that He shall come to be our Judge.” *For the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment unto the Son.* John v. 22. The Hymn now concludes in the Form of a Prayer to our Redeemer ; whom we earnestly supplicate to “ help” us with his Grace, “ whom he hath redeemed “ with his precious Blood ;” to number us with his Saints ; to “ save and bless” us ; to “ govern and lift us up for ever” — Thus, in a Variety of devotional Expressions, most judiciously chosen, we implore his continual Aid, and Almighty Protection ; and beseech Him to perfect the great Work He has begun in us, by bringing us safe to our *eternal Inheritance in the Heavens* : professing our intire Faith in his Merits, and Reliance on his Power and Goodness ; and promising, that we will “ magnify Him Day by Day, “ and worship his Name ever, World with “ out End.” With what Joy and Comfort
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must the pious and grateful Soul thus contemplate and invoke the great Saviour of the World ! How animating the Prospect ! How delightful, and truly heavenly, the Employment ! — *It is God that justifieth : who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the Right Hand of God, who also maketh Intercession for us.* Rom. viii. 33, 34. But when we turn our Thoughts upon ourselves, and take an impartial View of our own sinful Nature, when we consider the many and great Dangers we are constantly exposed to, great Reason have we to say with the Apostle, *Let us not be high-minded, but fear :* and to cry out, “ Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this Day without Sin.” — Every Day, every Hour, every Minute, we are liable to be seduced from our Obedience by *the Deceitfulness of Sin :* we must therefore be ever on our Guard, *and watch and pray that we enter not into Temptation.* — “ O Lord have Mercy upon us, have Mercy upon us,” should be our constant and fervent Petition. — “ O Lord, let thy Mercy lighten upon us, as our Trust is in Thee.” — So says holy David,

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vid, (Ps. xxxiii. 22) the great Pattern of true Devotion: and if we thus *trust in the Lord with all our Hearts, and in all our Ways acknowledge Him*; He has assured us, that He will *direct our Paths*; and we shall never be confounded."

The Benedicite.

Besides the TE DEUM, there is another Hymn allowed to be used between the Lessons at Morning-Service, called the BENEDICITE; but which, I think, is scarcely ever read in our Churches, though why it should be so neglected I can see no good Reason. — It is an Invocation of all the Works of the Creation, whether in Heaven or Earth, animate or inanimate, to praise and magnify the Almighty Creator: and it is supposed to have been sung by the Three Persons mentioned in the third Chapter of the Book of Daniel, immediately after their miraculous Deliverance from the fiery Furnace. There is a great Resemblance between this Hymn and the 148th Psalm; wherein David calls upon Men and Angels, Sun and Moon, and all
 3 Creatures

Creatures in general, to *praise the Lord*; whose *Name only is excellent*, and whose *Praise is above Heaven and Earth*. — As the *Power and Glory of God* are wonderfully displayed in all his Works, so they are all called upon, in a figurative Way of speaking, to set forth his Praise, tho' in strict Propriety, none but rational and intelligent Creatures can praise and glorify Him. — Instead of making any farther Remarks of my own on the BENEDICTIO, I shall subjoin a most elegant and beautiful Paraphrase on it, written many Years ago by the late Reverend and worthy Mr. Merriek; whose Genius for Poetry was no less remarkable than his Piety and Learning. — This excellent Specimen of it, though formerly printed; may not have fallen into every body's Hands. — They who have not seen it will, I am sure, thank me for inserting it; and they who have seen it, cannot fail, I think, to read it again with Pleasure.

B E N E D I C I T E :

OR

The SONG of the THREE CHILDREN,
PARAPHRASED.

By the Rev. Mr. MERRICK,
of Trinity College, Oxford.

I.

YE Works of God, on Him alone,
In Earth his Footstool, Heav'n his
Throne,
Be all your Praise bestow'd;
Whose Hand the beauteous Fabric made;
Whose Eye the finish'd Work survey'd,
And saw that all was good.

II.

Ye Angels, who with loud Acclaim
Admiring view'd the new-born Frame,
And hail'd th' eternal King;
Again proclaim your Maker's Praise,
Again your thankful Voices raise,
And touch the tuneful String.

III. Praise

III.

Praise Him, ye bright ætherial Plains,
Where in full Majesty he deigns
To fix his awful Throne;
Ye Waters, that above them roll,
From Orb to Orb, from Pole to Pole,
Oh! make his Praises known.

IV.

Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Pow'rs,
Oh! join your joyful Songs with ours,
With us your Voices raise:
From Age to Age, from Day to Day,
To Heav'n's eternal Monarch pay
Hymns of eternal Praise.

IV.

Celestial Orb, whose pow'rful Ray
Opes the glad Eye-lids of the Day,
Whose Influence all Things own;
Praise Him, whose Courts effulgent shine
With Light, as far excelling thine,
As thine the paler Moon.

.VI.

Ye glittering Planets of the Sky,
 Whose Beams the absent Sun supply,
 With him the Song pursue;
 And let himself submissive own,
 He borrows from a brighter Sun
 The Light he lends to you.

VII.

Ye Show'rs, and Dew, whose Moisture shed
 Calls into Life the opening Seed,
 To Him your Praises yield;
 Whose Influence wakes the genial Birth,
 Drops Fatness on the pregnant Earth,
 And crowns the laughing Field.

VIII.

Ye Winds, that oft' tempestuous sweep
 The ruffled Surface of the Deep,
 With us confess your God:
 See, thro' the Heav'ns the King of Kings,
 Upborn on your extended Wings,
 Comes flying all abroad.

IX. Ye

.IX.

Ye Floods of Fire, where'er ye flow,
 With just Submission humbly bow
 To his superior Pow'r
 Who stops the Tempest on it's Way,
 Or bids the flaming Deluge stay,
 And gives it Strength to roar.

.IX.

Ye Summer's Heat, and Winter's Cold,
 By Turns in long Succession roll'd,
 The drooping World to cheer;
 Praise Him, who gave the Sun and Moon,
 To lead the various Seasons on,
 And guide the circling Year.

.XI.

Ye Frosts, that bind the wat'ry Plain,
 Ye silent Show'rs of fleecy Rain,
 Pursue the heav'nly Theme;
 Praise Him, who sheds the driving Snow,
 Forbids the harden'd Waters flow,
 And stops the rapid Stream.

XII.

Ye Days, and Nights, that swiftly born
 From Morn to Eve, from Eve to Morn,
 Alternate glide away :
 Praise Him, whose never-varying Light
 Absent adds Horror to the Night,
 But present gives the Day.

XIII.

Light, from whose Rays all Beauty springs,
 Darkness, whose wide-expanded Wings
 Involve the dusky Globe;
 Praise Him, who, when the Heav'ns He
 spread,
 Darkness his thick Pavilion made,
 And Light his regal Robe.

XIV.

Praise Him, ye Lightnings, as ye fly,
 Wing'd with hot Vengeance thro' the Sky,
 And red with Wrath divine;
 Praise Him, ye Clouds, that wand'ring stray,
 Or, fix'd by Him in close Array,
 Surround his awful Shrine.

XV. Exalt

XV.

Exalt, oh ! Earth, thy heav'nly King,
 Who bids the Plants, that from thee spring,
 With annual Verdure bloom,
 Whose frequent Drops of kindly Rain
 Prolific swell the ripening Grain,
 And bless thy fertile Womb.

XVI.

Ye Mountains, that ambitious rise,
 And lift your Summits to the Skies,
 Revere his awful Nod ;
 Think how ye once affrighted fled,
 While Jordan fought his Fountain-head,
 And own'd th' approaching God.

XVII.

Ye Trees, that fill the rural Scene ;
 Ye Flow'rs, that o'er th' enamell'd Green
 In native Beauty reign ;
 Oh ! praise the Ruler of the Skies,
 Whose Hand the genial Sap supplies,
 And cloaths the thankful Plain.

[XVIII. Ye

XVIII.

Ye secret Springs, and gentle Rills,
 That murmuring rise among the Hills,
 Or fill the humbler Vale;
 Praise Him, at whose all-mighty Nod
 The rugged Rock dissolving flow'd,
 And form'd a springing Well.

XIX.

Praise Him, ye Floods, and Seas profound,
 Whose Waves the spacious Earth surround,
 And roll from Shore to Shore;
 Aw'd by his Voice, ye Seas, subside,
 Ye Floods, within your Channels glide,
 And tremble, and adore.

XX.

Ye Whales, that in the Ocean play,
 Or, flum'ring in the wat'ry Way,
 In Shoals unnumber'd lie;
 Praise Him, by whom ye all are fed,
 Praise Him, without whose heav'nly Aid
 Ye sicken, faint, and die.

XXI. Ye

XXX.

Ye Birds, exalt your Maker's Name,
Begin, and with th' important Theme
Your artless Lays improve;
Wake with your Songs the rising Day
Let Music sound from every Spray,
And fill the vocal Grove.

XXXI.

Praise Him, ye Beasts, that nightly roam
Amid the solitary Gloom;
Th' expected Phoenixize
Ye Slaves of the Plough and Flough
Your stubborn Necks obsequious bow
And bend your wistful Knees.

XXXII.

Ye Sons of Men, his Praise display
Who stamp't his Image on your Clay,
And gave it Power to move
Ye, that in Judah's Confinement dwell
From Age to Age his Wonders tell
The Wonders of his Love.

XXIV.

Let Levi's Tribe the Lay prolong,
 'Till Angels listen to the Song;
 And bend attentive down:
 Let Wonder seize the heav'nly Train;
 Pleas'd while they hear a mortal Strain
 So sweet, so like their own.

XXV.

Let those their thankful Voices join,
 That oft in Salem's sacred Shrine
 Before his Altar kneel;
 Where thron'd in Majesty He dwells,
 And from the mystic Cloud reveals
 The Dictates of his Will.

XXVI.

Ye Spirits of the just, and good,
 That, eager for the blest Abode,
 To heav'nly Mansions soar;
 Oh! let your Songs his Praise display,
 Till Heav'n itself shall melt away,
 And Time shall be no more.

XXVII. Praise

XXVII.

Praise Him, ye meek, and humble Train,
Ye Saints, whom his Decrees ordain
The boundless Bliss to share;
Oh ! Praise Him, till you take your Way
To Regions of eternal Day,
And reign for ever there.

XXVIII.

Let us, who now impassive stand,
Plac'd by the Tyrant's stern Command
Amid the fiery Blaze,
(While thus we triumph in the Flame)
Rise, and our Maker's Love proclaim
In Hymns of endless Praise.

The Benedictus.

After the second Lesson at Morning-Ser-
vice, we have the Choice of the Hymn
called the BENEDICTUS, and the hundredth
Psalm. Though the latter is almost constant-
ly used, I cannot imagine why the former
should be laid aside. They are both equally
indited

indited by the Holy Spirit, and both admirably calculated to assist the Devotion, and elevate the Affections of a Christian Congregation; and the Hymn, being placed first, seems to have been intended for more general Use than the Psalm. Let us consider each in its Order. This Hymn is commonly called the Song of Zacharias; having been dictated to him by the Holy Spirit, on Occasion of the Birth of his Son, St. John the Baptist; and spoken by him immediately after his Circumcision. For so we read in the first Chapter of the Gospel by Saint Luke, that after the long Silence he had suffered, as a Punishment for his Disbelief of the Angel, when he foretold the miraculous Conception and Birth of his Son; *his Mouth was opened, and his Tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.* Luke i. 64. And, being filled with the Holy Ghost, he brake forth into these rapturous Strains of Praise and Thanksgiving, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed his People." — The Birth of a Son to him in his old Age, when his Wife was well stricken in Years, and ac-

cording

cording to the common Course of Nature
 could not conceive, was doubtless a great and
 miraculous Blessing, that called for his most
 devout Acknowledgments, and must have
 filled his Mind with an Extasy of Joy and
 Rapture. Yet he passes over this, to praise
 God for a far greater Blessing, vouchsafed not
 to himself alone, but to all Mankind, in the
 approaching Birth of the SAVIOUR of the
 World, of whom his Son was the Forerun-
 ner, appointed to *prepare the Way before Him*.
 Often had the Lord God of Israel "visited,
 and redeemed his People;" often had He gra-
 ciously rescued and delivered them from their
 Captivity and Distress: but now He was
 about to *visit* them in a far more wonderful
 Manner, and not them only, but the whole
 Race of Mankind, by taking their Nature
 upon Him, and dwelling in the Midst of
 them: now He was going to redeem them,
 not as heretofore, from the Bondage of
 earthly Tyrants, and from temporal Calami-
 ties, but from the Slavery of Sin and Satan,
 and from spiritual Evils, and eternal Mi-
 sery. For so the inspired Priest goes on:
 "And hath raised up an Horn of Salvation
 for

for us in the House of his Servant David." He will now indeed, in the fullest Sense, *visit us with his SALVATION*—He will now make the true *Horn of David to bud*; and upon HIMSELF, upon the Son of David, *shall his Crown flourish*. Pf. cxxxii. 17, 18. — "As He promised by the Mouth of his holy Prophets, which have been since the World began." — The Redemption of Mankind by the Seed of the Woman, promised to our first Parents immediately after their Fall, has been ever since the constant Theme of the Prophets; the grand Subject of Faith and Hope to all succeeding Generations — The blessed Days are now coming, which Moses and *all the Prophets foretold*—when the Lord *will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute Judgment and Justice in the Earth*. Jer. xxiii. 5. — "That we should be saved from our Enemies, and from the Hands of all that hate us" — From the Enemies of our Souls; from our grand Adversary, the Devil, and his Agents, who are continually plotting our Destruction, and endeavouring to bring us into that Lake of Fire, to which they are doomed

doomed for their Disobedience. But vain is their Hatred, and fruitless all their Attempts, to the faithful Servants of God, who *so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son*, to save us from their Hands ; “ to perform the Mercy promised to our Forefathers ; and to remember his holy Covenant ” — even that *new and everlasting Covenant*, spoken of by the Prophet Jeremiah, a Covenant of *spiritual Mercies and Blessings*, promised to our Forefathers, whereof their temporal Deliverances were but Types and Shadows — “ To perform the Oath, which He swore to our Forefather Abraham, that He would give us ” (or “ that He would grant unto us ”) “ that we, being delivered out of the Hands of our Enemies, might serve Him without Fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before Him, all the Days of our Life.” — The Oath, here alluded to, is that mentioned in the 22d Chapter of Genesis ; where we read, that after Abraham had readily obeyed the divine Command, in offering up his Son Isaac, (which was designed to prefigure and represent the great Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, the true *Lamb for the Burnt-offering*)

and after he had been directed to offer up a *Ram in the Stead of his Son*; the *Angel of the Lord* called, and said unto him, *By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord — that in blessing I will bless Thee, &c. — and in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed.* Gen. xxii. 16, 18. — Here is a Promise, confirmed by an Oath, made to the Patriarch, of a spiritual Blessing to all Nations, that is, to all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who should follow Him in Faith and Obedience: for *they which are of Faith*, says St. Paul, *the same are the Children of Abraham — and are blessed with faithful Abraham.* Gal. iii. 7, 9. They are delivered out of the Hands of their *spiritual Enemies*, and admitted into the Service of God — to serve Him *without Fear* (which is always accompanied with *Torment*) and with the Love and willing Obedience of Sons — “*In Holiness and Righteousness all their Days*” — *For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all Men; teaching us that, denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World.* Tit. ii. 11, 12. Thus must we imitate the great Father of
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the Faithful, not only in a lively Faith, but in a ready and constant Obedience to the Will of God ; since *by Works*, we are told, *was his Faith made perfect*. Jam. ii. 22 ; else we shall infallibly forfeit our Title to the Blessing promised to his Posterity.

The good old Man having thus foretold the Accomplishment of the antient Prophecies, in the Coming of the Messiah, then at Hand, and the blessed Effects that were to flow from it ; we may suppose him, in the Midst of his holy Transport, casting his Eyes with paternal Fondness on his infant Son : “ And Thou, Child,” says he, “ shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, for Thou shalt go before the Face of the Lord, to prepare his Ways” — Others have prophesied of Him at a Distance, but Thou shalt announce his Coming as his immediate Forerunner ; Thou shalt be called a Prophet, yea and *much more than a Prophet* ; for in Thee shall be fulfilled those famous Predictions of Isaiah and Malachi ; Thou art *the Messenger sent to prepare the Way before the LORD*, even before the HIGHEST : Thou shalt *speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto Her, that her Warfare is accomplished, that*

her Iniquity is pardoned ; and many of the Children of Israel shalt Thou turn to the Lord their God. Thou art appointed “to give Knowledge of Salvation unto his People, for the Remission of their Sins ;” to preach Repentance, and proclaim the Approach of the promised Redeemer, declaring that the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand : — to publish the glad Tidings of Pardon and Peace, which shall be to all People ; to exhort them with humble and contrite Hearts to obey the heavenly Call. — “Through the tender Mercy of our God, whereby the Day-spring from on High hath visited us” — for to his undeserved Goodness alone do we owe this great Salvation : of his infinite Mercy He hath sent the Day-spring to visit us, and shall cause the Sun of Righteousness to arise with Healing in his Wings. Mal. iv. 2. — “To give Light to them that sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death : and to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace” — To dispel the dark Clouds of Ignorance and Superstition, with which the whole World is overspread, to free us from the Dominion of Sin and Death, and by converting our Hearts to lead us into the Way of
Peace ;

Peace ; of Reconciliation to God, of inward Comfort here, and of everlasting Happiness hereafter,

The hundredth Psalm.

This Psalm is, like many others, prophetical of the Gospel Dispensation ; and is an Invitation to the People of “all Lands,” Gentiles as well as Jews; to *rejoice in the Lord, to joy in the God of their Salvation.*—It would be endless to quote the various Passages in the Old Testament, in which the Gentiles are called upon to *glorify God for his Mercy.*—St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, Chap. xv, points out some of the most remarkable ; one in particular from the Song of Moses, where he says, *Rejoice O ye NATIONS, with his People.* Deut. xxxii. 43. The Prophecy of Isaiah is full of them ; and the Psalmist, in many of his divine Hymns, no less clearly declares those *glad Tidings of great Joy*, which should be to ALL PEOPLE—REJOICE IN THE LORD, is the Language of the inspired Writings throughout—*Rejoice in the Lord alway*, says the Apostle,

and again I say, rejoice. Phil. iv. 4. — Exhortations of this kind, one would think, were needless to those who live under the Light of the Gospel, and stedfastly believe the Promises of God in Christ Jesus. — Can they, who are redeemed from endless Death and Misery, and made capable of obtaining everlasting Life and Happiness, want Motives or Persuasions to *rejoice*? Can the *light Afflictions* of this World, *which are but for a Moment*, depress the Spirits, or abate the Joy of those, who firmly expect *an eternal Weight of Glory*? Does our gracious and merciful God *require* us to be joyful and happy; and shall we refuse to obey so pleasing a Command? — Yet, if one might judge from the gloomy and dejected Appearance of many Christians, one would imagine that they thought it their *Duty* to be melancholy, and to make themselves unhappy. So prevalent is the Force of Superstition and Enthusiasm, against the plainest Dictates of Reason and Religion. These teach us, as we are directed in the Psalm now before us, to “*serve the Lord with Gladness, and come before his Presence with a Song;*” to shew our Gratitude

tude for the Blessings He bestows on us by a constant Cheerfulness of Disposition, as well as by public Praises and Thanksgivings. This is the surest Way of recommending Religion to others, by letting them see the happy Effects of it on ourselves: this will afford the most convincing Argument, that *her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.* The first Christians, we are told, were distinguished, as for their Piety, so also for their GLADNESS OF HEART; *praising God, and having Favour with all the People.* Acts ii. 46, 47 — And St. Paul reckons Joy among the Christian Graces, or *Fruits of the Spirit.* Gal. v. 22; and tells us, that *the Kingdom of God, or the Religion of Christ, consists in Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy, in the Holy Ghost.* Rom. xiv. 17. — As a firm and well-grounded Faith is the only sure Foundation of this holy Joy and Gladness, the Psalmist thus proceeds — “*Be ye sure that the Lord He is God,*” &c. — that is, Be ye *thoroughly convinced* of this great Truth, and let it be rooted deeply in your Hearts, that the Lord is the only God, the

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supreme Ruler and Governor of the Universe, that He is our Creator and Preserver; the good Shepherd, who supplies all our Wants, and defends us against all our Enemies; and that *besides Him there is no Saviour*. From these Motives he exhorts us to “go into his Gates with Thanksgiving, and into his Courts with Praise; to be thankful unto Him, and speak good of his Name:” gladly to embrace every Opportunity of joining in public Worship, and offering Him our Sacrifice of Praise and Adoration. “For the Lord is gracious, his Mercy is everlasting; and his Truth endureth from Generation to Generation.”—The Immutability of the divine Perfections is a never-failing Ground of Confidence and Joy—*I am the Lord*, says He, *I change not*. Mal. iii. 6 — Or, as St. James expresses it, with Him is *no Variableness, neither Shadow of turning*.

The Magnificat, or Song of the blessed Virgin Mary.

This Hymn, which is the first appointed after the Lessons at Evening Service, contains

tains a devout Thanksgiving of the blessed Virgin to Almighty God, for the Salvation of Mankind; and an Acknowledgment of the peculiar Honour conferred on Herself, in making her the Instrument of bringing the Saviour into the World. — She begins by expressing her holy Joy and Transport, and praising God with all the Affections of her Heart and Soul, for his *general* Mercy and Goodness — “My Soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour” — She then goes on to acknowledge her own particular Obligation to Him — “For He hath regarded the Lowliness,” or the low Estate “of his Handmaiden” — She does not here speak of her Humility, or Lowliness of Spirit (though of that indeed she was an eminent Example) but of the Meanness and Obscurity of her Condition; admiring the Goodness of God, who in his infinite Wisdom *raiseth up the Poor out of the Dust*, and chooseth the *weak Things of the World, and Things which are despised*, that is the meanest and lowest of his Servants, to be the Instruments of conveying his greatest Blessings to the Sons of Men:—

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Various Instances of this Sort are recorded in the sacred Writings, but none so remarkable as this of the blessed Virgin, who was raised from Poverty and Disgrace, to be distinguished by the highest Honour, to be *highly favoured and blessed among Women*—“For behold, says she, from henceforth all Generations shall call me blessed: For He that is mighty hath magnified me, and Holy is his Name”—In Her was to be accomplished the antient Prophecy, that a VIRGIN should *conceive and bear a Son.* Is. vii. 14.—Of Her was to be born the Redeemer of Israel, the Saviour of the World, the HOLY ONE, *the MIGHTY GOD, the PRINCE OF PEACE.* Well therefore might all After-ages call Her *blessed*: well might they celebrate Her Memory; the Fruit of whose Womb was *the Author of eternal Salvation*: Well might they admire Her as a Pattern of true Meekness, and Piety, and Purity of Manners—But further than this we dare not go. To invoke Her as the Queen of Heaven, to pray to Her and worship Her, as One having divine Power, is the Height of Profaneness and Impiety; a direct Breach of *the first and great Command-*

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ment. How must her meek and humble Spirit have been offended and shocked, could She have foreseen the idolatrous Adoration of the Church of Rome, who not only call her blessed, but place Her upon an Equality with the blessed Lord of Heaven and Earth; nay, in some Sense make her superior to our Saviour, by beseeching her to command her Son to grant their Requests. — But to return to the Hymn. After her personal Acknowledgments of the divine Goodness, she takes a more enlarged View of it, as displayed in the Wonders of his Providence, and the grand Dispensation of Man's Redemption. “And his Mercy is on them that fear Him throughout all Generations” — As if she had said — Great as the Blessing is which I enjoy, and which is in some Sort peculiar to myself, yet far greater is the Blessing bestowed on all those in every Age, who fear God and obey his Commandments — Highly as I am favoured of the Lord, in bearing my Saviour in my Womb, it is through Faith in that Saviour alone that I and all his faithful Servants must seek for his Favour in Heaven” — So we read, that when a certain Woman said

said to our Saviour, *Blessed is the Womb that bare Thee, and the Paps which Thou hast sucked;* He replied, *Yea, rather blessed are they that bear the Word of God, and keep it.* Luke xi. 27, 28. — The next Words in the Hymn, “He hath shewed Strength with his Arm;” may be supposed to refer to the Omnipotence of God in general, but I think, are rather to be applied to the great Work of our Redemption, agreeably to those similar sublime Expressions of the Prophet, which plainly relate to it. *Awake, awake, put on STRENGTH, O ARM of the Lord.* Is. li. 9 — And again, *His ARM brought SALVATION unto Him.* lix. 16. — The Meaning of which is, that our Salvation is intirely the WORK OF GOD; the Effect of his infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness; to which we can no more contribute by any Strength of our own, than we can to raising the Dead to Life; to which we can have no Claim or Title, but what we derive from his free Mercy, and Promises in Christ Jesus. — The Virgin proceeds to give us an admirable Lesson of true Christian Humility, and to warn us against that spiritual Pride, which

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is the Source of all Evil and Misery —
 “ He hath scattered the Proud in the Imagination of their Hearts — He hath put down the Mighty from their Seat, and hath exalted the Humble and Meek.” — The whole Bible is full of the same Doctrine. *The Lord setteth up the Meek*, says David — *He will beautify the Meek with Salvation* — *The Meek also*, says the Prophet, *shall increase their Joy in the Lord, and the Poor among Men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel: For the terrible One is brought to nought, and the Scornor is consumed.* Is. xxix. 19, 20 — And our blessed Lord, *Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.* Matt. xxiii. 12 —
 “ He hath filled the Hungry with good Things, and the Rich He hath sent empty away” — So says our Saviour; *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be FILLED.* Matt. v. 6 — shall be filled with those *spiritual good Things*, which they so earnestly desire, with the Graces and Comfort of God’s Holy Spirit, and shall drink of the *Fountain of the Water of Life freely* — But the Rich, that is, they who, like the Laodiceans,

Laodiceans, say, *We are rich, and increased with Goods, and have need of nothing*; who pride themselves in their own Righteousness and Attainments, and seek not the *true Riches*, which come from God only; they shall be *sent empty away*; shall be convinced that they are *wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*. Rev. iii. 17; shall be destitute of God's Favour here, and consigned to everlasting Destruction hereafter. —

The Virgin concludes her Song with a particular Celebration of the divine Mercy to the House of Israel, and a Declaration of the fulfilling of the Promises made “to their Forefathers, to Abraham and his Seed for ever.”

The 98th Psalm ⁿ.

What was the immediate Occasion of this Psalm's being composed, it is not material for us to enquire. The ultimate Intent, and spiritual Meaning of it, which is all we are con-

ⁿ There is a striking Resemblance between this Psalm, or *new Song*, as David elegantly styles it, and the 42d Chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah; to which I desire to refer the Reader.

cerned in, are very clear and evident; relating to the Times of the Messiah, and the Victories to be gained by him over the Enemies of his Church and People. Considered in this Light, it is doubtless a very proper Subject for our Meditations; and ought surely to be sometimes used, as well as the Hymn preceding. The Thoughts it contains are noble and elevated; and the Language, in which they are expressed, wonderfully lofty, and animating. The Universality of Man's Redemption is here painted in the strongest Colours; "All the Ends of the World," says the inspired Penman, "have seen the Salvation of our God" — Hence all Lands and Nations are invited to shew their Joy and Gratitude for the Mercies they are all called to partake of; to praise and magnify their great Lord and King, their Saviour, and mighty Deliverer; to "sing to the Harp," and other musical Instruments, "with a Psalm of Thanksgiving." — When we reflect on the great Number of Predictions in the Writings of the Prophets, as well as in the Psalms, manifestly pointing out the Calling of the Gentiles, and the general Offer of
Pardon

Pardon and Peace to all Mankind, it is astonishing how the Jews could be so blind as to mistake their Meaning, and appropriate the Promises of a Redeemer to themselves, which were evidently made to all without Exception, who should accept the gracious Terms of Salvation. And it is no less surprising that any Christians should presume to limit the Mercies of God, and the Merits of the Death of Christ, to particular Persons, whom they call the Elect; when the Scripture expressly declares, that *God is no Respector of Persons*, that He would have ALL MEN *to be saved*, and that our blessed Lord *died, and gave Himself a Ransom, for ALL*; and the Invitation is general, and unlimited, WHOSOEVER WILL, *let him take the Water of Life freely*. Rev. xxii. 17: with many other Passages to the same Purpose.—The Psalmist, after having called upon all Mankind to praise God their Saviour, proceeds, in the figurative Style, to bid “the Sea and all that therein is, the round World, and them that dwell therein, the Floods and Hills,” all Nature animate and inanimate, to join in proclaiming the Glory of the great Creator,
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and Lord of the Universe: directing our Thoughts, in the last Place, to that grand and awful Event, the final Judgment of the World — “ For He cometh, says he, to judge the Earth—With Righteousness shall He judge the World, and the People with Equity.”—Then shall *Death, the last Enemy, be destroyed*, and our Saviour’s Triumph be completed — the Wicked shall acknowledge the Justice of their Sentence ; and the Righteous shall *enter into the Joy of their Lord*, and shall reign with Him for ever and ever.

The Nunc dimittis, or the Song of Simeon.

This short, but comprehensive, Hymn was spoken, as St. Luke informs us, at the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, by one Simeon, a *just and devout Man*, who, rejecting the false Notion, which at that Time so much prevailed among the Jews, of a *temporal Deliverer, looked for the SPIRITUAL REDEMPTION, and true CONSOLATION, of Israel.* The Promise he had received, by a divine Revelation, of *seeing the Lord’s Christ* before he died, was now fulfilled : accord-

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ingly we read that *he came by the Spirit into the Temple*, and there taking up the holy Infant, the Saviour of the World, in his Arms, *he blessed God, and said*: “Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, according to thy Word” — The earnest Desire of his Soul was now fully satisfied; his Eyes had seen the promised Messiah, the *Prince of Peace*, the Author of Salvation to “ALL PEOPLE;” the true Light, *which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World* — who was “to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the Glory of thy People Israel” — For so the Prophet had long since foretold: *It is a light Thing that thou shouldest be my Servant to raise up the Tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be my SALVATION unto the End of the Earth.* If. xlix. 6. Happy the Man, who having seen his Saviour with the Eyes of Faith, and firmly trusting in his Merits, can, like the good old Simeon, resign his Soul with Joy and Comfort into the Hands of God who gave it; who, having *set his Affections on Things above, not on Things on the Earth,*

Earth, can look with Indifference and Contempt on the perishing Goods of this Life; and be willing, and desirous, with St. Paul, rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord!

The Sixty-seventh Psalm.

THY KINGDOM COME! was a principal Part of the Prayers of all devout and faithful Servants of God, as well before, as since, the Coming of Christ. They that believed in the promised Seed, who was to *bruise the Serpent's Head*; that *looked for Redemption in Israel*, and Salvation to all the Ends of the Earth; that is, the true Church of God, in all Ages of the World, joined in the Spirit, if not in the exact Words, of this Petition, which our Lord has commanded us to use in our daily Addresses to the Throne of Grace. The Psalm now before us seems to be a Sort of Paraphrase upon it; expressing, in the most lively Terms, the pious and earnest Request of the royal Author, that it would please God to “make his Way known upon Earth, his saving Health among all Nations” — Or we

may consider it as prophetic; foretelling, as well as imploring, the general Diffusion of the divine Mercy to all the Race of Mankind. Some of the Sentences are plainly in the Style of Predictions, as “Thou shalt judge the Folk righteously, and govern the Nations upon Earth” — which is expressed almost in the same Words in the last Verse of the 98th Psalm, which has been before discoursed on. And again, after a repeated Petition to God, that “the People, yea that ALL the People may praise Him,” the Psalmist immediately adds, “Then shall the Earth bring forth her Increase: and God, even our own God, shall give us his Blessing.” There is a peculiar Force in these Words, “OUR OWN GOD” — as if he had said: “God, who is become, in a nearer and stricter Relation to us, *our own God*, our Saviour, and Redeemer;” or, as it is expressed in another Psalm no less emphatically, *He is OUR GOD, even the God of whom cometh SALVATION: God is the Lord, by whom we escape Death.* Pf. lxxviii. 20.—“God shall bless us, and all the Ends of the World shall fear Him”—that is, shall believe in Him, or serve Him.

Him. Thus did holy David, in this, as well as in many other of his inspired Hymns, foretel the Kingdom of the Messiah. And though in Part these Predictions are already fulfilled, yet the principal and most glorious Accomplishment of them is still to come: when the Earth shall, in the fullest Sense, “bring forth her Increase;” or, in the Words of the Prophet, shall be *full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea*. Is. xi. 9. For the Arrival of which happy Time as we are taught *daily* to pray, so we may very properly here, with the Psalmist, beg of God, that He will thus “give Us his Blessing” — and that “all the Ends of the World may fear,” and obey, “Him.”

The Apostles' Creed.

As Faith in God is confessedly the Foundation of all Religion, so the Belief of the true God, as revealed to us in the holy Scriptures, under the personal Distinctions of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is

doubtless the first Principle of Christianity. The Light of Nature, the Deductions of Reason, and Tradition, may give us some general Notions of a supreme Being; but the true Knowledge of God can only be had from Revelation ¹. The Bible therefore is the only sure and infallible Guide in Matters of Faith, as well as Practice: and no hu-

ⁱ How insufficient all other Means are to this Purpose, appears incontestably from the vague, confused, and absurd Notions of the Deity, that prevailed in the Heathen World. The wisest and most learned of their Philosophers saw and acknowledged their own Ignorance; and strongly maintained the Necessity of a divine Revelation to lead them to the Knowledge of God, and instruct them in their Duty towards Him. For want of this, the Generality of the People embraced the most wild and extravagant Opinions, and ran into all Manner of Wickedness and Immorality — As St. Paul well describes them; *Professing themselves to be wise, they became Fools.* Rom. i. 22: after which he gives us a striking Picture of them in the following Verses — And again; *The World by Wisdom KNEW NOT GOD.* 1 Cor. i. 21 — *Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did Service unto them, which by Nature are no Gods.* Gal. iv. 8. So that the Heathens, with all their natural Talents, and human *Wisdom*, were, truly and properly speaking, what the Apostle tells the Ephesians they had been before their Conversion, WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD. Eph. ii. 12. And our modern *Deists*, as they are very improperly called, are in the Scripture Sense downright *Atheists*: For *whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.* 1 John ii. 23; or HATH NOT GOD. 2 John 9.

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man Composition whatsoever has, or can have, any Authority, but what it derives from the unerring Word of God. Creeds, or Summaries of Christian Doctrine, are indeed very useful, as containing in few Words the Sum and Substance of what is there more largely delivered; and so far as they are agreeable to Scripture, and can be proved thereby, they demand our Assent and Belief. The Apostles' Creed, as it is the most antient, so is it the most plain, clear, and useful that has ever been introduced into the Church of Christ. It bears the Name of the Apostles, not on Account of it's having been composed by the Apostles (as some have asserted without sufficient Proof) but because it contains a brief Summary of the Doctrine they taught; of that *Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints*, and for which we are exhorted *earnestly to contend*. Our Church has with great Propriety given it a Place in the daily Service, since we cannot be too often reminded of those fundamental Articles of our Belief, on which we build our divine Worship: and she has wisely directed us to repeat it *aloud*, because as *with the*

Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, so with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation. Rom. x. 10. And it is placed *before* our Prayers, that we may duly consider who it is we are to pray to, what Blessings we are most earnestly to implore, and for what Mercies we are principally to return Thanks.

The first Article of our Belief is in “God, the Father Almighty;” the Fountain and Original of all Power and Might, *our Father* by Creation and Adoption, and in a peculiar Manner *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*—“Maker of Heaven and Earth;” that is, the Creator of all Things, visible and invisible.—We next declare our Faith in the Second Person of the ever blessed Trinity, “his only Son, our Lord”—who is called JESUS, according to the Direction given by the Angel before his Birth, on Account of his being the SAVIOUR of the World (for so the Word signifies in the Original) and CHRIST from his being *anointed*, that is, appointed by the Father, to bear the several Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, to which Men were formerly consecrated by being anointed with
Oil,

Oil. Thus God is said to have *anointed* our Saviour *with the Oil of Gladness above his Fellows*. Ps. xlv. 7—to have *anointed Him to preach the Gospel to the Poor*. Is. lxi. 1—and to have *anointed Him with the Holy Ghost, and with Power*. Acts x. 38.—As a Prophet, He came to declare to us the Will and Counsel of God, and was *approved of Him by Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs*. Acts ii. 22. As a Priest, He offered up Himself, the only true Sacrifice, for the Sins of Mankind. As a King, He has given us Laws for the Conduct of our Lives, and reigns over us with full and supreme Power, defending us against our Enemies, and conducting all his faithful Servants and Subjects, through this State of Trial, to his eternal Kingdom in Heaven. Thus is He, in the fullest Sense, KING OF KINGS, and LORD OF LORDS; and is called OUR LORD, and our ONLY LORD, not to exclude the Father and the Holy Spirit from that Title (which is expressly given to them, as well as to the Son, in Scripture) but on Account of his being in a peculiar

peculiar Sense *our Lord* by Redemption, having *bought us with a Price*, and *purchased us to Himself with His own Blood*. For to this End Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be LORD both of the Dead and Living. Rom. xiv. 9.—And He is called the “only Son of God,” because, though Angels and Men are in some Sense honoured with that high Title, yet no created Being ever was, or can be, styled the Son of God in the Manner our Saviour is : who is GOD HIMSELF, *blessed for ever* ; and is therefore named the Son of God, as He is of the same Nature, or Substance, with the Father ; “begotten of Him before all Worlds.” And He is likewise called so on Account of his miraculous Conception by the Holy Ghost. See Luke i. 35. So that whether we consider Him with Respect to his divine, or human Nature, He is, in either Sense, strictly and properly, the SON OF GOD.—It follows, that He was “born of the Virgin Mary”—by which Means He became *perfect Man*, as well as *perfect God* ; taking our Nature upon Him, and being *made in all Things like unto us*, only
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without Sin; being intirely free from that original Pollution, with which every Son of Adam is infected, and exhibiting in his divine Example a perfect Pattern of Holiness, and Obedience to the Will of God. And being found in Fashion as a Man, He humbled himself still further, and became obedient unto Death, even the cruel and ignominious Death of the Cross. Phil. ii. 8. "He suffered under Pontius Pilate," the Roman Governor; "was crucified, dead, and buried."—Thus was *He made to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him.* 2 Cor. v. 21—that is, He, who was perfectly holy and free from Sin himself, was made a Sin-offering for us, was substituted in the Place of Sinners, to suffer the Punishment of Sin, and satisfy the divine Justice; that we, through his Merits, and the Imputation of his Righteousness, might be accounted righteous before God, and obtain the Reward of Righteousness, purchased for us by the precious Blood of his dear Son. This is what St. Paul calls *the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ*

Christ unto all, and upon all, them that believe. Rom. iii. 22 ; or, as he describes it in the next Chapter (applying the Words of David, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.) *the Blessedness of the Man, unto whom God imputeth Righteousness without Works.* The Meaning of which Passages, and of all other the like Expressions in Scripture, is plainly this, that Man, being born in Sin and guilty of many actual Transgressions, and therefore obnoxious to the Wrath and Vengeance of God, can be saved no otherwise than by the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, who was *made a Curse for us.* Gal. iii. 13 ; and became “ a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World ” — that our Repentance and imperfect Obedience, though indeed absolutely necessary as Conditions of our Salvation, can have no Efficacy towards procuring it — that BY GRACE *we are saved* ; that is, by the free Mercy, and undeserved Goodness of God, in and through the Merits of Christ — and lastly, that FAITH is the Instrument, whereby we apply that Mercy, and those Merits, to ourselves. — This explains the true
 Scripture

Scripture-Doctrine of Justification by Faith, so much insisted on by St. Paul ; and which is by no Means inconsistent with what St. James maintains, (however at first Sight they may seem to differ) that *by Works a Man is justified, and not by FAITH ONLY.* Jam. ii. 24. For the Faith, St. Paul speaks of, is not a bare speculative Belief (such as wicked Men, and even Devils, may have ; and which, instead of justifying, will only increase their Condemnation) but an active, lively Faith, that *worketh by Love*, and produces the Fruits of true Holiness and Virtue. And St. James, when he affirms that Works are necessary to Justification, does in no Sense ascribe any *Merit* to them, but only urges their *Necessity*, as an Evidence of that Faith, which the other Apostle so largely insists on, and as an indispensable Condition of that Pardon and Salvation, which are procured for us solely by the Death and Merits of Christ.

After mentioning our Lord's Death and Burial, the Creed goes on to inform us, that " He descended into Hell," by which we are to understand, that his Soul, immediately

mediately on it's Separation from his Body, went into the invifible State of departed Spirits, and there remained till it was reunited to it at his Refurrection. This feems to be the plain and obvious Meaning of that Passage in the Pfalms, on which this Article is founded ; *Thou fhalt not leave my Soul in HELL.* Pf. xvi. 11. The Word which we here tranflate HELL, as well as that in the Acts of the Apoftles, where the Passage is quoted, fignifying the IN-VISIBLE STATE, or the State of Souls when parted from the Body ; not the Place of the damned, as the Word HELL is now commonly ufed to fignify. And this Interpretation of the Article in the Creed feems to be juftified by that Expreffion of our Saviour to the penitent Thief on the Crofs, *TO-DAY fhalt thou be with me IN PARADISE.* Luke xxiii. 43 ; which clearly implied, that *our Lord Himfelf* was to be in that happy State, here called *Paradife*, where *the Dead, which die in the Lord, reft from their Labours.* Rev. xiv. 43. It may be confidered moreover as a Refutation of that abfurd and dangerous Notion of fome Heretics,

retics, who denied that our Saviour had any human Soul, supposing that his divine Nature supplied the Place of it.

We are next taught to profess our Belief in that grand Article of Faith, his Resurrection: "The third Day He rose again from the Dead." Which, as it was foretold and typified under the old Dispensation, so was it evidenced by many infallible Proofs recorded in the New Testament *. By this great Act of Omnipotence He was declared to be the *Son of God with Power*; the Sufficiency of his Satisfaction, and Atonement, was hereby demonstrated; and our Justification, in Con-

* It would carry me too far, to enter upon these Proofs in a Work of this Sort; and as I am writing only to Christians, I should hope it were needless. It may not, however, be amiss to advise the pious Reader, once for all, to be particularly attentive to those Portions of Scripture, which our Church has judiciously selected for the Edification of her Members, in the proper Psalms and Lessons, as well as in the Epistles and Gospels; where he will find the strongest and clearest Evidences for every Article of the Christian Faith.—Thus, for Instance, in regard to the great Doctrine of our Lord's Resurrection, let him have Recourse to the proper Services appointed for *Easter Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday*. And for his further Instruction, I would recommend a careful Perusal of Stanhope on the Epistles and Gospels, Wogan on the proper Lessons, and Nelson on the Fasts and Festivals.

sequence

sequence thereof, fully assured to us. For as He was *delivered for our Offences*, so we are told, He was *raised again for our Justification*. Rom. iv. 25. Thus, as St. Peter expresses it, *hath God begotten us again unto a lively Hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead; to an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us.* 1 Pet. i. 34. How should this glorious Prospect animate and enliven us, in running our Christian Race, and *pressing toward the Mark, for the Prize of our high Calling!* How mean, how trifling, how contemptible, must all the Enjoyments of this Life appear to one, who looks beyond the Grave, and who, with a steadfast Faith, and fervent Zeal, *seeks those Things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the Right Hand of God!*

The Ascension and Exaltation of our Lord are the next Articles, to which the Creed directs our Meditations. Having finished the great Work of our Redemption, so far as it was to be performed by Him here on Earth, and having instructed his Disciples in *Things pertaining to the Kingdom*
of

of God, He ascended visibly into Heaven, there to appear in the Presence of the divine Majesty, as our High Priest, our Mediator, and Advocate. In this exalted State He is represented as “sitting on the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty;” by which we are to understand his being invested by the Father with all Power and Dominion, both in Heaven and Earth, reigning in his mediatorial Capacity, as God incarnate, *’till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet.* 1 Cor. xv. 25—“From thence He shall come” (at the Time appointed by the Father, which for wise Reasons is concealed from our Knowledge) “to judge the Quick,” or Living, “and the Dead.” For so the Scripture assures us, that *God hath appointed a Day, in the which He will judge the World in Righteousness, by THAT MAN, whom He hath ordained.* Acts xvii. 31—even by the blessed Jesus, who having taken our Nature upon him, and having been made in all Things like unto us, Sin only excepted, can be *touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities;* and is therefore qualified, both as God and Man, to be a righteous and merciful

L Judge

Judge of all his Creatures. The Proofs of this important Article of our Faith, both from the Old and New Testament, are as full and clear as possible. The Prophet Daniel describes the future Judgment in the most sublime and affecting Language ; and St. Paul, speaking of the same awful Event, refers us for Evidence, not to the dark Reasonings and Conjectures of heathen Philosophers, but to the Words of the holy Spirit of Truth, as delivered by Isaiah — *We shall all stand*, says the Apostle, *before the Judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every Knee shall bow to ME, and every Tongue shall confess to GOD.* Rom. xiv. 10, 11. A most strong and convincing Proof this, amongst numberless others, of the Divinity of Christ !—In that great Day, when *the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with Him*, the whole Race of Mankind shall appear before Him, to receive their final and irreversible Sentence of Happiness or Misery. All our Thoughts, our Words, and Actions, shall then be brought into Judgment ; and they that have done Good shall go into Life
everlast-

everlasting, and they that have done Evil into everlasting Fire.

The next Article in the Creed relates to the third Person in the ever-blessed Trinity ; “ I believe in the Holy Ghost ” — or the Holy Spirit ; who is also called in Scripture, THE LORD, *the eternal Spirit, the Spirit of Holiness, the Holy One, the Spirit of Truth*, and TRUTH itself. Moreover, He is said to SEARCH ALL THINGS, or to be omniscient, which is the peculiar Property of God ; the same Word being applied to the Person of the Father, Rom. viii. 27 ; and to the Son, Rev. ii. 23. And as in one of the Passages here referred to the Apostle tells us, that *He that searcheth the Heart* (that is, the Father,) *knoweth what is the Mind of the Spirit* ; so in another He says, *the Spirit searcheth all Things, yea the DEEP THINGS OF GOD* ; and again in the next Verse, *the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God*. 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11. For as he says in another Place, *who hath known the Mind of the Lord ?* The plain Meaning is, that the Mind or Counsel of God is known only to Himself ; but *the Spirit knoweth all Things, yea the deep Things of*
L 2 God ;

God; therefore the Spirit is God. And He is expressly so called in the holy Scriptures: for our Saviour is said to be the SON OF GOD, on account of his being miraculously conceived by the Holy Ghost. Luke i. 35. Christians are called the TEMPLES OF GOD, because the SPIRIT OF GOD *dwelleth in them*. 1 Cor. iii. 16. And Ananias is charged with lying unto God, because *he lyed to the HOLY GHOST*. Acts v. 3, 4. The peculiar Office of the Spirit in the Work of Man's Redemption is, to sanctify our corrupt Nature, to renew and cleanse us from our original Pollution at our Baptism, and to support and animate us in the Performance of our Duty by his constant Assistance, and his divine Influences. He is also our COMFORTER; the Author of all spiritual Comfort, and of that Joy and Peace of Mind, which *the World cannot give*, nor take away. He is said likewise to *help our Infirmities*, Rom. viii. 26. in a peculiar Manner in regard to the great Duty of Prayer; inspiring our Hearts with fervent Devotion, and instructing us how to pray as we ought; acceptably to God, and profitably to ourselves.

selves¹. How thankful should we be for these great and glorious Privileges, and how careful to make a right Use of them, in obeying the Motions of our divine Counsellor! *If we live in the Spirit*, says St. Paul, *let us also walk in the Spirit*. Gal. v. 25. that is, if He graciously vouchsafes to direct our Paths, let us walk worthily of such an heavenly Guide, in the Practice of all Virtue and Holiness, AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT.

Here ends the principal Part of the Creed; and it were to be wished that, in our repeating of it, a decent Pause were made after the Words, “ Holy Ghost,” to distinguish it from what follows. For hitherto we have declared our Faith in the Holy Trinity, into whose Name we were baptized. The remaining Articles relate to some of the most important Doctrines of our Religion,

¹ This seems to be the Sense of that Expression we meet with in the Passage here referred to, that *the Spirit itself* MAKETH INTERCESSION *for us*, which should be carefully distinguished from the *Intercession* of Christ. It is the Office of the Spirit to dispose and enable us to pray; of the Son, as our Mediator and High Priest, to offer up our Prayers, and render them acceptable at the Throne of Grace. The former respects the *Act* of Prayer; the latter the *Effect* of it.

which we are required indeed firmly to believe, because they are revealed to us by the Word of God: but when we profess our Belief in these, it is in a somewhat different and more restrained Sense than when we say, we “believe in God the Father Almighty, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.” For to *believe in* the Divine Being implies, not only a firm and steady Belief of the Existence and Perfections of God, but also an hearty Trust and Dependance on Him, a Reliance on his Promises, a Submission to his Will, and an intire Devotion of ourselves to his Service. This is that true and lively Faith, which alone will be available to our Salvation; and this we should always most sincerely and cordially profess, when we declare our Belief in the Blessed Trinity. Thus, when we say, “I believe in the Holy Ghost,” we should not confine our Thoughts to the Nature or Essence of the Holy Spirit, as being One with the Father and the Son (though that is the first Thing intended to be thereby acknowledged) but extend them to the Offices He sustains in the Work of our Redemption, as our Sanctifier and Comforter ;
and

and to our consequent Obligations to adore, and obey Him. It follows; “the Holy Catholic Church” — to believe *in which*, or rather to believe *which* ^m, signifies only that we believe *that there is* such a general Society of Christian People dispersed throughout the World; not confined to any particular Age, or Nation, but CATHOLIC or UNIVERSAL ⁿ; according to the Descriptions so often given of it in the sacred Writings. This is what the Psalmist speaks of, when he says that ALL NATIONS *shall serve* Christ, and *call Him blessed* — what the Prophets so often foretell, and Malachi in particular describes, as being collected out of all Parts of the World; *from the rising of the Sun even unto the going down of the same*; when in EVERY PLACE *Incense should be offered unto the Name of the Lord, and a pure Offering* — and of this we read in the Revelation, as being ga-

^m This Distinction is carefully observed in the Nicene Creed; where, after the Article of Belief *in* the Holy Ghost, follows; not, *I believe in*, but “*I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism,*” &c.

ⁿ This is the true literal Meaning of the Word *Catholic*, wherever we meet with it.

thered out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation. Most vainly and falsely therefore does the Church of Rome assume to Herself the Title of *Catholic*, or *Universal*, which belongs to the whole Church of Christ, of which she is only a Part, and a very corrupt one. But we, who have not so learned Christ, declare our Belief in, or of, that universal Church, which is built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone; which He loved, and gave himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing; but that it should be holy and without Blemish. Eph. v. 25, 27: and which He has graciously promised to protect and defend to the End of the World, so that the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Matt. xvi. 18. This is the BODY, whereof Christ is the HEAD; the BRIDE, of which He is the HUSBAND; the BRANCHES of Him who is the true VINE.

The next Article of the Creed, "the Communion of Saints," relates to the Fellowship (for that is here meant by "Communion")
subsisting

subsisting between the several Members of the Church, who *being many are one Body in Christ, and every one Members one of another.* Rom. xii. 5. And they are called “ Saints,” that is holy, to signify the Purity, and Holiness, so essential to true Christianity: for *as He which hath called us is Holy, so must we be holy in all Manner of Conversation.* 1 Pet. i. 15. On this Account the Apostle says, *Ye are a chosen Generation—AN HOLY NATION*°. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Now the Communion, or Fellowship, of Christians consists in this; that we are all Servants of the same God, redeemed by the precious Blood of the same Saviour, sanctified by the same Spirit, governed by the same Laws, Partakers of the same Sacraments, and Heirs of the same Promises: For *truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,* 1 John. i. 3. *and with the Holy Spirit,* 2 Cor. xiii. 14, and Phil. ii. 1 — Again; *we being many are one Bread,*

° By Saints, in Scripture Language, are meant Christians, or Believers. An *unholy* Christian, therefore, is a Contradiction in Terms; a Sort of spiritual Monster; the worst of Infidels; who *professes to believe in Christ, but in Works denies Him.*

and

and one Body : for we are all Partakers of that one Bread, in the holy Eucharist—I Cor. x. 17. — And, by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body — and have been all made to drink into one Spirit, in the Cup at the Lord's Table, ib. xii. 13. If then we are thus closely joined together in one Society, if we are thus intimately united as Members of one Body, how careful should we be to preserve this happy Union by following the Directions of the Word of God, so frequently and so earnestly enforced, to love as Brethren, to be of one Mind, to live in Peace, to edify one another in Love! So shall the GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE be with us. Whereas if there be Envy, and Strife, and Divisions among us, the Apostle assures us, that we are carnal, and walk as Men. I Cor. iii. 3. that is, we are in that Case Followers of the Flesh in Opposition to the Spirit, and live as Men, as natural unregenerate Men, not as Christians. Now to be carnally minded, is Death; but to be spiritually minded, is Life and Peace. Rom. viii. 6. And among the Works of the Flesh are Hatred, Variance, Wrath, Strife, Envyings: but the Fruit of the

the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness. Gal. v. 20, &c. — It is to be observed further, that the Communion of Saints not only takes in the whole Body of Christians now living, but extends to the Saints departed; to *the general Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect*: for with these are we properly united, as belonging to the same Country, even to JERUSALEM, *which is above, which is the Mother of us all.* Gal. iv. 26. — The Scripture constantly represents us, with great Elegance and Propriety, as *Strangers, and Pilgrims, and Sojourners* here on Earth; having *our Conversation*, or (as it should more properly be rendered) *our Citizenship, our Home, our Habitation, in Heaven.* Phil. iii. 20. The right Use to be made of this Doctrine is, that we earnestly *desire, and seek after, that better Country, to which we belong; that we set our Affections on Things above; and offer up our fervent Prayers to the Throne of Grace, that we may be found meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.*

Having thus acknowledged the Goodness of God in purchasing to Himself an universal Church by the Blood of Christ, and uniting the Members of it into one Body under Him ; we are next taught to declare our Belief of the grand Privileges conferred on us in the new Covenant, even “ the Forgiveness of Sins ;” and, in Consequence thereof, the Salvation of our Souls and Bodies. This is the great Doctrine of the Gospel, and *the End of our Faith* : and it is declared to us in such plain Terms, and in such a Variety of Passages, that it is impossible for any unprejudiced Reader to mistake the Meaning of them. In this, as well as in every other fundamental Article of Faith, the Scriptures are so exceedingly clear, that *he that runneth may read, and understand, them.* That all Men are Sinners, born with a strong Propensity to Sin, and guilty of numberless actual Transgressions ; that Disobedience deserves Punishment, and that *the Wages of Sin is Death*, and Misery ; that God has graciously promised Forgiveness to all such as shall believe and repent, for the Sake of the Merits and Death of his

his dear Son ; and that by his Resurrection He has restored to us everlasting Life : these are Truths, which the sacred Writings every where teach us. By the Sacrament of Baptism we are admitted into this new and gracious Covenant ; by that of the Lord's Supper we are confirmed and preserved in it. In both the blessed Influences of the Holy Spirit are imparted to us, so far as is necessary to enable us to perform the Conditions required on our Part, and to *work out our own Salvation*. REPENT YE, AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL ; REPENT YE, AND BE CONVERTED, THAT YOUR SINS MAY BE BLOTTED OUT ; is the Language of Christ, and his Apostles, and of all his faithful Ministers, to the End of the World. True Faith, and true Repentance, are inseparable ; and true Repentance must always be understood to include a sincere and hearty Obedience to the Will and Laws of God, so far as our imperfect Nature will permit. And whoever hopes to obtain Pardon and Salvation on any other Terms, will find himself fatally deceived, and must perish eternally.

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“ The Resurrection of the Body,” is another Article of Faith clearly revealed to us in the Gospel ; as it was foretold in several Places of the Old Testament. The Testimony of Job is full and express ; *Though, after my Skin, Worms destroy this Body, yet IN MY FLESH shall I see God.* xix. 26. — The Prediction of Isaiah is no less plain : *Thy dead Men shall live ; together with MY DEAD BODY shall they ARISE ; awake and sing, ye that dwell in Dust ; for — the Earth shall cast out the Dead.* Is. xxvi. 19 — And again ; *Your BONES shall flourish like an Herb.* lxvi. 14. The Vision of Ezekiel xxxvii. 1, &c. the Prophecy of Daniel xii. 2, &c. and other Passages in the Prophets, tend strongly to illustrate and confirm the same Doctrine — But the more particular Manifestation of it was reserved for the Times of the Gospel ; which sets forth every Thing relating to it, so far as it was needful or proper for us to know, in the plainest Terms imaginable. And more than this, as we cannot possibly know in this Life, let us not presume to enquire. All human Reasonings and Conjectures on this Subject must ever be vain and delusive.

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Let us be content to believe what God has revealed, and wait with Patience for that happy Time, when *this Mortal shall have put on Immortality*; and we shall see the Glory of the Lord *Face to Face*, and *know even as we are known*. 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

The last Article of the Creed is, “the Life everlasting;” or that immutable and eternal State which will succeed the general Resurrection and Judgment. And though these Words may seem principally to refer to the future State of the *righteous*, yet they must be understood to include also that of the *wicked*; the Scriptures being equally clear and express in Regard to both. For so we are told, that there will be a *Resurrection* both of the *just and unjust* — that *the Hour is coming, in which ALL that are in the Graves shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done Good, unto THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE; and they that have done Evil, unto THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION* — John v. 28, 29; that the one *shall go away into EVER-LASTING Punishment; but the righteous into Life ETERNAL*. Mat. xxv. 46. Of the
Nature

Nature of these future Rewards and Punishments we cannot possibly frame any just or adequate Ideas at present: both the one and the other being infinitely beyond what we can think or imagine. The Scripture gives us only general, and partly figurative Representations of them; describing the Misery of the wicked by the most terrible and alarming Expressions, and the Happiness of the righteous under the most sublime and affecting Images that can be conceived — The former, we are told, shall be doomed to an EVERLASTING FIRE, *prepared for the Devil and his Angels: where their Worm dieth not — where shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth — where the Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no Rest, Day nor Night.* Rev. xiv. 11: while the righteous shall *shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father, in a Kingdom that cannot be moved — in the Possession of their promised Inheritance, that fadeth not away — in the Fulness of Joy, and Pleasure, for evermore.* Matt. xiii. 43, and Ps. xvi. 11.

Before I conclude this Article, I would take
Notice

Notice of a very decent and proper Custom, which our Church enjoins, and to which no reasonable Objection can be made, of bowing, or making Obeisance, at the Name of JESUS. This was originally designed, and ordered to be done *at all Times*, when his holy Name is mentioned in divine Service: but as that might be attended with some Inconvenience, it may be sufficient to do it in repeating the Creeds; when, as the Canon directs, “ due and lowly Reverence should be done by all Persons present; testifying by these outward Ceremonies and Gestures their inward Humility, Christian Resolution, and due Acknowledgment, that the Lord Jesus Christ, the true eternal Son of God, is the only SAVIOUR of the World, in whom alone all the Mercies, Graces, and Promises of God to Mankind, for this Life, and the Life to come, are fully and wholly comprised.”

The Versicles before and after the Lord's Prayer.

The two first Versicles are a mutual Salutation, in the Words of Scripture, between the Minister and People; expressing their

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godly Love and Affection one for the other. We may consider them also as a short preparatory Prayer of each ; the Minister praying, that “ the Lord be with us ; ” that He would prepare our Hearts for the solemn Business we are about to enter upon ; and the Congregation offering up the like Petition for him, that the Lord would “ be with,” or direct, “ his Spirit.” — The Words following, “ LET US PRAY,” (which often occur in the Liturgy) are designed as an Admonition to us, to collect our Thoughts, and apply our Minds, wholly and fervently, to the great Work of Prayer. To begin which with the more Solemnity, and to express our deep Humility, we first implore the divine Mercy, in a distinct Address to each Person of the ever-blessed Trinity ; which is sometimes called, the short Litany — Then follows the Lord’s Prayer ; and after that, some Sentences, taken chiefly from the Psalms, and excellently adapted to the Purpose of Devotion. They are concise, plain, and intelligible ; and seem to contain the Sum and Substance of the Prayers that follow. For in these we pray
for

for God's Mercy and Salvation; for Peace and Grace; for his Blessing in general, on the King, the Clergy, and People. In the five first of these Sentences there is not, I think, the least Difficulty, or a single Word liable to be misunderstood. In the sixth there is an Expression, which may not, perhaps, be quite so clear and intelligible — “thy CHOSEN People.” Were many Persons, who constantly attend our Service, and repeat these Words, to be asked what they mean by them, I fear they would be at a Loss to give an Answer. Now since it is highly fitting and desirable that we should understand our Prayers, and every Expression in them; and since the Phrase now before us, with others of the like Import, frequently occurs in the holy Scriptures (which it is no less necessary for us to understand, as far as we are able) it will not, I hope, be thought an impertinent or useless Attempt, to endeavour to fix and ascertain the true Sense and Meaning of these Words, and of others of a similar Signification. The Petition where they occur in our Liturgy, as well as the two following, is

taken from the Psalms; (Ps. cxxxii. 9, and xxviii. 9) and it is very plain, I think, that the Words, “thy chosen People,” or, as it is in the Original, *the Saints*, and *thy People*,—and — *thine Inheritance*,—all mean precisely the same Thing; being applied by the Psalmist to the People of the Jews, and by us to the whole Body of Christians: for by these, and such like, Titles both the one and the other are usually distinguished from the Heathens, or Unbelievers, in the sacred Writings. This Point is so clear with Respect to the Use of the Words in the Old Testament, that I presume it will not be disputed. In the New, particularly in the Epistles, there is a Variety of Words and Phrases, generally (tho’ not always) used in the same Latitude of Signification, to denote the Members of the Christian Church, or of any one Church to whom the Writers are addressing themselves *in general*, and not to point out any select Persons among them *in particular*: such as, the *Saints*, or *Holy*; the *Faithful*, or *sanctified*, in *Christ Jesus*; *Called*, or *called to be Saints*; *Chosen*, or *Elect*; and the like. So likewise, the Words,

Calling,

Calling, and *Election*, are commonly used in the same Sense, to signify the *general* Admission of Persons into the Christian Covenant, not any *particular* Destination to eternal Life. With some one, or more, of the Titles above-mentioned St. Paul accosts the Churches he writes to, in most of his Epistles. Even the Corinthians, though many of them were exceedingly corrupt, and sharply reprov'd by him for their Divisions, and other Offences; yet, when he addresses them *in general*, he styles them *sanctified in Christ Jesus, CALLED to be Saints, and unto the Fellowship of Christ*. 1 Cor. i. 2. In writing to the Galatians, though he does not begin his Epistle by saluting them in his usual Style of, *Saints, Beloved, &c.* and though he complains of their general Defection from the Purity of the Gospel, or of their *not obeying the Truth*, yet he expressly tells them, that they had been *CALLED into the Grace of Christ*, Ch. i. 6. The Ephesians he seems to distinguish in a particular Manner, calling them *Saints, Faithful in Christ Jesus, blessed with all spiritual Blessings, chosen,*
M 3 *predestinated,*

predestinated, sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise, &c. and commending them highly for their *Faith and Love*; yet at the same Time he admonishes them, to *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they were called*, and to *put on the whole Armour of God, &c.* that they might BE ABLE, *having done all*, TO STAND. This plainly shews, he thought them not absolutely incapable of *falling*; or of being *removed*, like the Galatians, *from Him that called them*; that is, from God. In like Manner, in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, though he assures them of their ELECTION OF GOD, and tells them that God had *from the Beginning* CHOSEN them to *Salvation*, yet he signifies his Fears, *lest by some Means the Tempter should have tempted them, and his Labour have been in vain.* 1 Thess. iii. 5. St. Peter also, writing to those whom he calls ELECT according to the Foreknowledge of God the Father, &c. exhorts them, nevertheless, to be *sober and vigilant*, and to give Diligence to MAKE THEIR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE, 2 Pet. i. 10. And at the End of the Epistle,

tle, he bids them *beware, lest they FALL from their own Stedfastness* ^p. From these Passages, and from the whole Tenor and Scope of the Writings of both the Apostles, it evidently appears, that the Words *Called, Chosen*, and the like, which so often occur in

^p There is a remarkable Expression in the Epistle of St. Jude, which exactly corresponds with the Language and Doctrine of the other Apostles; though the Form of Salutation he uses has one Word in it, which does not occur in theirs. He begins: JUDE, &c. : *to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and PRESERVED in Jesus Christ, and called*, Ver. 1. Towards the Conclusion, he admonishes them, to KEEP THEMSELVES *in the Love of God*, &c. Ver. 21. What I would observe principally is, that the Word, which we translate *preserved* in one Place, is the same in the Original with what is rendered *keep* in the other: and it plainly shews, that being *preserved and called in Jesus Christ*, was not meant to signify an *absolute* certain Call to Salvation (for if so, to what Purpose was the following, or indeed any, Admonition?) and that, though all good Christians are *preserved* or *kept* in the Faith and Obedience of Christ by his divine Spirit, yet they are in some Sense required to KEEP THEMSELVES *in the Love of God*. St. Paul expresses this with great Accuracy in his Exhortation to Timothy: *That good Thing which was committed unto thee, KEEP BY THE HOLY GHOST, which dwelleth in us*; 2 Tim. i. 14. In short, let the profane Deist on the one Hand, or the mistaken Enthusiast on the other, say what he will, the Scripture-Docctrine is plain and clear, that there must be a *Concurrence* of human Efforts with divine Grace; and that Man, though he can do nothing to merit Salvation, must, in order to obtain it, *co-operate* with God. See Phil. ii. 12, 13.

them, signify in general the same as CHRISTIANS, or Members of the Church of Christ, who are now, what the Jews were of old, *a chosen Generation, an holy Nation, a peculiar People.* 1 Pet. ii. 9. That the *Calling*, or *Election*, of these is, in other Words, a free Offer, made to them by God, of Mercy and Salvation, on the gracious Terms of the Gospel: that they only, who so obey this divine Call, as to *walk worthy of their Vocation*, shall be finally accepted: and that the faithless, and disobedient, shall be rejected. — In the 20th and 22d Chapters of the Gospel by St. Matthew we meet with a remarkable Expression of our Saviour's, at the Conclusion of two Parables, which may serve to illustrate this Point: *Many*, says He, *are called, but few are chosen.* Here indeed the Words *called* and *chosen* are used in a different Sense one from the other; but the Meaning of both is plain. The CALL is *general*, according to the usual Acceptation of the Word in the New Testament: MANY are *called*, or invited to accept the gracious Offer of Salvation; but *few*, comparatively, are *chosen*.

Why? Because few obey the Call, or at least persevere in their Obedience to the End: Many are *bidden* to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb; but few are *found worthy to partake of it*. The CHOSEN, therefore, in these Parables, are such as shall approve themselves, by their Constancy in Faith and Obedience, to be the true Servants of God; such as are described, in the strictest Sense of the Words, and shall finally be acknowledged, to be the CALLED, and CHOSEN, and FAITHFUL. Rev. xvii. 14.—There is a Passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Ch. viii. v. 28, &c. where the Apostle seems to use the Word *Called* in this limited Sense, and to speak of a particular *Calling*, or *Appointment*, of certain Persons to eternal Salvation.—But if he does, it is very clear that he does not mean, as some have supposed, an *arbitrary* Appointment of God, without any Regard to their future Faith and Obedience; but rather, an Appointment *in Consequence of his foreseeing*, or *foreknowing*, their good Dispositions to be such, as would render them fit Objects of his Mercy and Goodness. For, as St. Paul says,

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whom He did FOREKNOW ⁹ *He also did*

PREDESTI-

9 However this Text may have been tortured by the Patrons of absolute Predestination, it is, according to the plain and obvious Meaning of the Words, a strong and clear Proof of the contrary Doctrine. For what can the Expression, *whom He did foreknow*, signify, but that He foreknew they would be fit Objects of his Mercy and Favour? To say, that God foreknew there *would be* such and such Persons, is saying nothing more than what might be said with equal Truth of all Mankind: for *known unto Him are ALL HIS CREATURES* from all Eternity. To confound his Fore-knowledge with his Fore-appointment, is extremely absurd and dangerous; and will lead to the most impious and shocking Conclusions. These Ideas must ever be kept distinct and separate; as the Apostle, teaches us in the Passage before us. He evidently speaks of a Gradation in the divine Proceedings, in order to bring Men to Salvation, and all in Consequence of his Fore-knowledge. First, God *foreknows*; then, or therefore, He *predestinates*, or appoints; then *calls* them by his Grace; then *justifies* them by the Application of the Sacrifice and Merits of the Redeemer; then *glorifies*, or brings them to eternal Joy and Glory. If therefore to *foreknow* does not signify, barely to know that such Men would be born; nor to *fore-appoint*, which is mentioned distinctly from it; it can mean nothing else, but to foreknow they would be *fit* to be *appointed*, *ready* to obey his *Call*, *disposed* to believe in the Saviour through whom they were to be *justified*, and *meet* to be Partakers of the promised Bliss and Glory.—In like Manner, God, having promised to distinguish Abraham with his signal and peculiar Blessing, gives this as a Reason; FOR I KNOW HIM, *that he will command his Children, and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the*
Lord;

PREDESTINATE, &c.—*and them He also called—justified—glorified.*—From this, and some other mistaken, or perverted, Passages in this Epistle, strange Conclusions have been drawn, and Doctrines deduced, highly derogatory to the Wisdom and Goodness of God, and contrary to the general Scope and Design of the inspired Writings^r. Hence the wild and enthusiastical Notions of absolute Decrees, arbitrary Predestination, irresistible Grace, the Perseverance of the Saints,

Lord, to do Justice and Judgement; THAT THE LORD MAY BRING UPON Abraham that which He hath spoken of him. Gen. xviii. 19. He knew him, and therefore He blessed him. He had spoken of him good Things, or promised to bring upon him his Favours, because He foresaw he would be fit to receive them.

^r It should be a general Rule, in our Interpretation of Scripture, to endeavour to explain the difficult and obscure Passages by those that are easy to be understood: and when any Notion occurs to us evidently repugnant to the general Drift and Tenor of the inspired Writings, we should instantly reject it, as the Offspring of our Ignorance or Prejudices. With respect to the Epistles of St. Paul in particular, we are told that there *are some Things hard to be understood; which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own Destruction. 2 Pet. iii. 16.* The several Doctrines I have reckoned up seem to have taken their Rise chiefly, if not intirely, from a Misinterpretation of some difficult Passages in those Epistles.

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partial Redemption, and the like : Doctrines, contrary both to right Reason and Scripture, and subversive of true Virtue and Holiness ; which have given too much Occasion to the Scoffs of the Infidel, the Doubts of the weak and ignorant, the Despondency of the fearful, and the Presumption of the arrogant. Happy would it be for the Cause of Religion, would Men be content to know, and believe, what is plainly revealed to them, and to practise what is clearly commanded ; without endeavouring to be *wise above what is written*, or to build human Systems on the Word of God. The grand fundamental Articles of our Faith, and the Measures of our Duty and Obedience, are set before us in plain and positive Terms throughout the Bible. The glad Tidings of the Gospel are loudly proclaimed to us, the *Call* is general, the Way to Heaven is *open* ; our divine Guide is ever at hand to conduct us thither ; and it is intirely our own Fault, if we do not at length arrive there : whether we shall, or shall not, so arrive ; or what will be the Condition of other Men in a future State, we know not, nor is it fitting that we should know.

know. The great Searcher of Hearts alone can distinguish the real from the nominal Christian: *He knoweth who are his*, and they shall be *preserved for ever*. It is our Duty, to think charitably of all Men; to *pray for all*, to *do good to all*, especially unto those who are of the *Household of Faith*: not to pry into the Secrets of Heaven, or amuse ourselves with vain and uncertain Speculations, much less arrogantly to impose them upon others; but to *mind our own Business*, to *work out our own Salvation*, and, however firmly we may *think we now stand*, to *take Heed lest we fall*. — But to return to the Liturgy.

After having prayed to God for his “chosen People,” or for the whole Church of Christ, that He would fill them with all spiritual Joy and Comfort, that He would “save and bless” them; we in the next Place offer up a Petition for “Peace,” (which is certainly one of the greatest of all earthly Blessings) “because there is none other that fighteth for us, but only Thou, O God.” — This last Versicle, however it may have been objected to, and perversely interpreted, is evidently meant to signify our
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humble Dependence upon the supreme Disposer of all Events, who alone can give us Success in War, or bestow upon us *the Blessing of Peace*. For, as the Psalmist piously declares, *It is not my Sword that shall help me: but it is THOU, that savest us from our Enemies. — O be THOU our Help in Trouble, for vain is the Help of Man.* — Praised be God, who has for so many Years “given us Peace in our Time!” Let us all heartily pray to Him, to continue this invaluable Blessing to us, and our Posterity. — The two last Versicles contain a Petition for the constant and blessed Influence of the Holy Spirit, to “make clean our Hearts within us,” those corrupt Fountains of Sin and Iniquity; and to assist and support us in the Discharge of our Duty. And whoever is duly sensible of his own natural Depravity, his Weakness, and Inability to serve and please God, will join most fervently in this Supplication for divine Grace; without which our best Efforts would be vain and ineffectual. — Thus far the alternate Petitions. The remaining Part of the common daily Service consists of Collects, or Prayers, to
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be repeated by the Minister only; the People silently attending, and saying Amen at the End of each.

The Collects, and Prayers, to the End of the Service.

To enter into a minute Examination of every Sentence in these Collects and Prayers, would be equally tedious and unnecessary; they being as remarkable for their Plainness and Perspicuity, as for that excellent Spirit of Piety and Devotion, which runs through them all. I shall therefore only make some general Observations on the Plan and Design of each Prayer, drawing a few short practical Inferences, as I go along, and explaining such Passages as appear to have any thing difficult or obscure in them.—The first Collect of the Day (which is common to both Morning and Evening Service, as well as that for the Communion) is always admirably adapted to the Festival, or Season, to which it is appropriated, and also to the Epistle and Gospel that follow. It is generally short, plain, and easy to be understood ;

stood ; containing one or more Petitions for some Blessings, spiritual or temporal, (commonly the former) with an Introduction, and Conclusion, judiciously suited thereto. Many of these Collects are Prayers for the gracious Assistance of God's Holy Spirit, introduced with some striking Expressions of true Christian Humility ; such as must afford the most useful Instruction to all who sincerely and devoutly attend to them. — The Second Collect, both at Morning and Evening Service, is intitled “ the Collect for Peace : ” the former seems to relate more immediately to *outward* Peace, or Deliverance from our *worldly* Enemies ; the latter to *inward* Peace, and Protection against our *spiritual* Adversaries : though both, I apprehend, are, in some Sort, intended to be included in each. — In the Morning-Collect we address Almighty God, as He is so often described in Scripture, as “ the Author of Peace, and Lover of Concord ; ” Titles, which belong to Him in every Sense of the Words ; whether we consider Him as the Author of our Redemption, and Reconciliation to Him, through the Blood of Christ, who is there-
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fore emphatically called our PEACE; or as the Cause, and Giver, of our *inward* Peace of Mind; or, lastly, as the Lover of Concord and Unity among his Creatures, to which we are so earnestly exhorted in his holy Word.

——“In Knowledge of whom standeth our eternal Life”——These Words are taken from a Passage in the Gospel by St. John, Ch. xvii. Ver. 3. where our blessed Saviour, praying to his Father, that he would glorify Him, in order that he might promote his Father's Glory, by bestowing eternal Life on those whom He had given him, adds; *And this is LIFE ETERNAL, that they might KNOW Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.* And what is here meant by *knowing God*, our Lord's own Words will best explain; when, upbraiding the Jews for their Unbelief, he tells them that *they have not known God* — but, says He, I KNOW HIM, and KEEP HIS SAYING. John viii. 55. So that the true Knowledge of God, like true Faith in Him, always implies Obedience.—It follows——“whose Service is perfect Freedom.”——A State of Sin is properly a State of Slavery, and is constantly represented so in

Scripture. The carnal, or unregenerate, Man is said by St. Paul to be *sold under Sin*. Rom. vii. 14; and every wicked Person, however he may boast of his Liberty, is in Reality the greatest of Slaves; a Slave to his Lusts and Passions, a Slave to the World, and to the great Enemy of Souls; Tyrants, who will bear no Controul. Whereas the Service of God is a State of perfect Freedom. *Ye shall know the Truth*, says our Lord, *and the Truth shall make you free — and if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be FREE INDEED*. John viii. 32, 36: that is, If ye know and embrace the Gospel of the Son of God, who is TRUTH itself, then ye shall be made free from Sin, and all its dreadful Consequences, Fear, Horror, and Despair. The Service God now requires of us, is the Love and willing Obedience of Children, not the abject Dread, and Drudgery of Slaves: and to *serve Him faithfully*, is to be FREE INDEED. — The following Part of the Collect needs no Paraphrase, or Explanation. This Inference, however, may be properly drawn from it; that in all our Dangers and Adversities we should trust in the Lord, who alone is able
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to defend and deliver us ; fervently praying to Him for his Aid and Protection, and stedfastly believing that He will make *all Things work together for Good to them that sincerely love, and obey Him.*

The second Collect at Evening-Service is a Prayer, chiefly, for inward or spiritual Peace, for that Peace of Mind “ which the World cannot give ;” or, as it is called in Scripture, *the Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding* : that is, in other Words, the Comfort and Happiness arising from a Sense and Experience of the divine Favour, by which his faithful Servants are supported under all the Troubles of Life, and of which others can have no Notion, or Conception. For this Peace we pray to God, *because* from Him “ all holy Desires, all good Counsels, and all just Works do proceed” — whence we may learn the close Connection between Holiness and Happiness, even in this Life, and the Necessity of our practising the one, in order to obtain the other. There can be no rational and well-grounded Assurance of the Favour of God, unless our “ Hearts are set to obey his Commandments :” no true Re-
N 2 *joicing,*

joicing, without the Testimony of a good Conscience. Rest and Quietness, Joy and Comfort, are the genuine Fruits, the natural Effects, of a virtuous and godly Life. Nor is it any Objection to the Truth of this Assertion, that some few Instances may be produced of good Men being oppressed with Sorrow, and Melancholy; since, whenever this happens, it evidently proceeds from some bodily Distemper, or from great Weakness of Mind. The general Rule will still hold good, *that great PEACE have they that Love the Law of God, and keep his Commandments.* It is therefore with the strictest Propriety that we invoke Him as the Author of every good Thought and Action, when we pray unto Him for inward Peace; desiring, in Effect, that He will make us *holy*, in order to make us *happy*.

The third Collects differ more, I think, in their Titles, than in their true Meaning, and Design. That for the Morning is called "the Collect for Grace to live well;" but it seems to be a general Supplication for the Blessing and Protection of the Almighty, during

during the Course of the ensuing Day : and since our spiritual Concerns are by far the most material, we pray chiefly to be defended against the Snares of Sin, and the Dangers of Temptation, and to be enabled “ to do always what is righteous in his Sight.” This Prayer is very properly introduced with a pious Acknowledgment of the Goodness of God, in having “ brought us safe to the Beginning of the Day.”——The Evening Collect is intitled, “ for Aid against all Perils ;” in which we pray to be preserved “ from all Perils and Dangers of the following Night.” By these we are doubtless to understand all Dangers that may affect our Souls, as well as our Bodies ; all wicked Thoughts, which may assault us in the Night, as well as the Day. From these and all other Evils, we pray to Him, who *neither slumbereth nor sleepeth*, to guard and defend us. The Words, “ Lighten our Darkness,” are borrowed from the 18th Psalm ; and as applied in this Collect, may be taken either literally, as a Petition for the Removal of the *natural* Darkness that overspreads the

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Earth,

Earth, by the Light of the next Morning; or figuratively (which seems to be the principal Design of them here) as a Supplication for the Grace of God, to dispel our *spiritual* Darkness, and *enlighten* our Minds.—These Collects were plainly intended to be constantly used every Morning and Evening: and though few of us have an Opportunity of doing this in public, yet we may all use them so in private, making them a Part of our secret Devotions.—And indeed how can we so properly begin and end the Day, as with these pious Addresses to our Great Creator, and Preserver? How so well imprint in our Minds an humble and grateful Sense of our Dependance on Him, who is the Giver of all good Gifts, both temporal and spiritual? Long Forms of Prayer may be irksome and tedious; and many Persons have neither Time, nor Inclination, to use them: but sure I am, that no Christian can plead any good Excuse for neglecting to employ at least some few Minutes of the Day in the Use of those excellent Prayers our Church prescribes; which are the more excellent
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for being short, and are infinitely more useful and edifying than all other devotional Compositions whatsoever.

Hitherto we have been praying chiefly for ourselves. We now proceed, according to the apostolical Injunction, to *make Supplications, Prayers, and Intercessions for ALL MEN* : and first for the King, who is the Deputy and Vicegerent of God ; and, under Christ, the supreme Head of the Church. To pray for Princes and Governors, has been the Practice of all Nations, in every Age of the World ; and certainly with the greatest Reason and Propriety. For the Blessings of Government are evidently great and manifold ; whereas a State of Anarchy is ever attended with Disorder, and Confusion, and Evils innumerable. But we Christians are more particularly bound to pray *for Kings, and all that are in Authority*, as the Apostle expressly commands, 1 Tim. ii. 2. ; since this is an essential Part of that Loyalty, which our holy Religion so indispensably requires of all its Professors : a Duty, which no Variation of Times or Circumstances can alter : which was equally

obligatory under Heathen Princes, and even under such as were Enemies and Persecutors of the Faith ; as it is now, that Kings are become the Guardians and *Nursing-Fathers* of the Church. Our blessed Saviour has left us, in his divine Example, a perfect Pattern of Obedience to Government : who, though He was LORD OF ALL, submitted to the established Powers, as being *ordained of God* ; paid Tribute, with Chearfulness, to the Heathen Emperor ; and withstood not the unjust Sentence of Pilate, who acted by his Authority ; but was *obedient, even unto Death*. And what their Master thus practised, the Apostles every where preached, at a Time when the worst of Tyrants sat upon the Throne. Nor was their Preaching without Effect ; for we read of no Mutinies, or Rebellions, in those pure and primitive Ages of the Church : all was quiet and peaceable. Loyalty was one distinguishing Mark of the Disciples of Christ ; and they never failed, on all Occasions, to *pray for* the higher Powers, notwithstanding they *despitefully used, and persecuted* them. What a glaring Contrast appears between *their* Conduct

duſt and *ours* ! They *obeyed* an Heathen Tyrant : we *diſobey* a truly Chriſtian Monarch. They *ſubmitted* to a Perſecutor : we *oppoſe* the Defender of the Faith. They *adorned* the Doctrine they profeſſed, by a meek and quiet Spirit : we *diſgrace* it by Turbulence and Faction. They *prayed* for the Scourge and Enemy of his Subjects : we *revile* the Friend, and Father of his People. — The Prayer in our Liturgy, which led me into theſe Reflections, is happily adapted to that Spirit of Loyalty, which our Church on all Occaſions recommends ; and no Perſon that is void of that Spirit, can join in it without groſs Hypocriſy. The Language is remarkably noble and ſublime ; the introductory Part grand, and ſolemn ; and the ſeveral Petitions that follow are extremely pertinent and proper. There is not a Word in it, I think, that wants explaining. May God give us all Grace to uſe it with Sincerity and Devotion, and to ſhew our Loyalty in the whole Courſe of our Lives and Converſations, endeavouring, by all Means in our Power, to contribute to the Eaſe and Happineſs

piness of our truly gracious Sovereign, whose grand Aim, whose supreme Delight, is to promote the Interest and Prosperity of his People!

After the Prayer for the King, naturally follows that for the Royal Family; which is equally clear, and intelligible. In this too we imitate the primitive Church, which to their Petitions for the Emperor always added some for the imperial Family. But let us not think we have discharged our Duty by only praying for them. Something more is certainly required of us: for if we are bound to honour our Sovereign, we ought surely to pay a suitable Regard and Reverence to those that are so nearly related to him; not to listen to every idle and scandalous Report, which Malice may propagate concerning them; but to think, and speak, of them with Affection and Respect; to admire and applaud their Virtues; and rather to conceal, than publish, their Failings. Happy would it be for us, would we cultivate the same Love and Harmony in our private Families, which subsist so remarkably in the royal House; and copy those bright
Examples

Examples of conjugal Fidelity, parental Affection, and filial Piety, which shine there with uncommon Lustre.

We come now to the Prayer for the Clergy and People ; wherein we beseech the Almighty, in few, but significant Words, to send down upon both the gracious Influence of his Holy Spirit, and to “ pour upon them the continual Dew of his Blessing.” The Term, “ Curates,” in this Prayer, is designed to include all the inferior Clergy, under the Order of Bishops, to whom is committed the *Cure*, or Care, of Souls. The *Dew* of the divine Blessing is an elegant Phrase, borrowed from the Scriptures ; where we often find the blessed Influence of the Holy Spirit on the human Heart described by the Effects of Dew, or Rain, upon the Earth. *I will pour WATER upon him that is thirsty, and FLOODS upon the dry Ground*, says the Lord by the Prophet Isaiah ; and then adds, by Way of Explanation, *I will pour MY SPIRIT upon thy Seed, and my BLESSING upon thine Offspring*. Is. xliv. 3. So again, *I will be as the DEW unto Israel*. Hos. xiv.

xiv. 5. And brotherly Love, which is one of the choicest Fruits of the divine Spirit; is by the Psalmist compared to the DEW of *Hermion*, and to the Dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion. Pf. cxxxiii. 3. But it may be asked, Why do we invoke God in this Prayer, as Him "who alone worketh great Marvels?" That He only doeth great Wonders (as David expresses it; Pf. cxxxvi. 4.) is certain: but where is the Propriety of connecting this with what follows? Is there any Thing *marvellous*, or *wonderful*, in the common Operations of his Grace? — Doubtless there is; nor are they to be accounted less wonderful for being common. The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, at the Feast of Pentecost, we justly look upon as truly wonderful and miraculous. The constant and ordinary Influence of the same Spirit on the Hearts and Lives of Christians is equally

* Our Saviour's Coming is foretold both by David and Hosea, under the beautiful Figure of Rain, or kindly Showers. He shall come down like Rain upon the mown Grass, as Showers that water the Earth. Pf. lxxii. 6. He shall come unto us as the Rain; as the latter and former Rain unto the Earth. Hof. vi. 3.

an Evidence of the divine Power, and where it is not resisted, but produces its proper Effect, may well be called *marvellous*. For to subdue the corrupt Desires of our depraved and fallen Nature, to order the unruly Wills and Affections of sinful Men, and to bring forth the Fruits of Virtue and Holiness; can be the Work of none other but that Almighty Being, who first formed us, who *only doeth wonderous Things*, and who is GOD ALONE. The Misfortune is, that what we see and experience regularly and constantly we are apt not to attend to, nor consider from whence it comes. The Wonders of God in what we call the common Course of Nature and Providence are, I fear, as little regarded as the Wonders of divine Grace; and that, merely because they are common. Yet it must be acknowledged, that the daily Course of the Sun is no less a Proof of almighty Power, than the Interruption of that Course was, when it stood still in the Days of Joshua; and that the constant Supply of our daily Food is no less an Argument of infinite Might and Goodness, than was the miraculous Sustenance of the Israelites in the Wilderness,

derness, by the Manna sent down from Heaven. — The practical Inferences, I would draw from the Prayer before us, are these :— In every Thing to acknowledge the Hand of God, and the Wonders of his Love to Man : to be particularly thankful to Him for the spiritual Gifts and Blessings He mercifully bestows upon us, and to use them to his Honour and Service : to obey the Motions of his good Spirit, in the Practice of every Christian Grace and Virtue : to be duly sensible of his Wisdom and Goodness in appointing a Set of Men to minister to us in his Church : to attend diligently to their Instructions, to shew them a proper Regard in every Instance of our Behaviour towards them, and to contribute cheerfully to their Maintenance and Support ; for *so bath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.* 1 Cor. ix. 14.

The Prayer of St. Chrysostom, and the Blessing, shall be considered at the End of the Litany.

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The Occasional Prayers and Thanksgivings.

Although these are put after the Litany in our Prayer-Books, yet as they make a Part of the constant daily Service, I think it may not be improper to consider them in this Place. In this admirable Collection the Church has not only given us a Prayer and Thanksgiving for general Use, but has also furnished us with Devotions for every Exigency, or public Calamity, with which it may please the Almighty to visit us. Some of these Prayers, blessed be God, we have seldom Occasion to have Recourse to; nor ought they to be used except in Cases of urgent Necessity. Those, in particular, appointed for Time of Famine or Plague, have not been used during the Memory of any Man now living. But as this Nation has formerly been visited with those terrible Messengers of the divine Wrath, and as we know not how soon our Sins may draw them down upon our Heads, it is very expedient that we should have suitable Terms of Sup-

plication for such Occasions: and none can be more proper than what our Church has provided for us; they being all calculated to inspire us with an humble Sense of our own Vileness, and of the Justice of God in sending his Judgments upon us. It is true, that what we look upon merely as Afflictions and Punishments are often designed by infinite Wisdom as Instruments of his Love and Goodness, and employed by Him to reclaim a wicked Age or Nation. For so the Prophet tells us, that when the *Judgments of God are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.* Is. xxvi. 9. And the Apostle assures us, that *when we are judged* (that is, visited with temporal Punishments) *we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the World.* 1 Cor. xi. 32. Yet, whenever the Hand of God is upon us, we may, nay we ought humbly to implore his Mercy, and to beseech Him, if it be his blessed Will, to avert his Judgments. And if He graciously vouchsafes to grant our Petitions, it becomes us to return Him our most hearty Thanks, in public as well as private;

private; for which our Church has made ample Provision.—The Prayer to be used “in the Time of War and Tumults” has been sometimes censured as severe and uncharitable; but surely without any good Reason. If it is right to enter into a War, in Defence of our just Rights and Possessions (as most certainly it is) and to repel Force by Force, when we are openly attacked; it cannot be wrong, nay indeed it is our bounden Duty, to pray to the supreme Disposer of all Events, and “the Giver of all Victory,” that He will grant us Success in such a War, and “save us from the Hands of our Enemies.” In this Case, we do not pray, so much for *their* Destruction, as for *our own* Preservation; not for the Prolonging of the War, but for the Restoring of Peace. The Prayer before us is evidently formed upon this truly Christian Plan. There is one Expression in it, however, which I think may possibly be misunderstood, and seem to carry an Air of Uncharitableness with it, that was never intended: it is this, “to punish Sinners.” Now these Words may be supposed by some to be applied to our Enemies, as if

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we looked upon *them* as Sinners, and *ourselves* as righteous, in the true Spirit of the Pharisee. But I am persuaded they were meant quite otherwise ; to signify, that we are conscious of *our own* manifold Sins and Provocations, and that we acknowledge the Justice of God in *punishing us* for them by the War we are engaged in. For War, however justly undertaken, or prosperously carried on, is always a great Evil, pregnant with many Calamities ; and ought to be considered as a just Judgment of God for the Sins of the Nation. To whom as “ it belongeth justly to punish Sinners ; ” so also does it “ to be merciful to them that truly repent : ” which follows very properly in the Introduction to a Prayer for his Defence and Deliverance, since we dare not expect or ask for them, but upon Condition of our true and sincere Repentance^{*}. The

Petitions

^{*} We meet with the same pious Thoughts, admirably expressed and enlarged upon, in the Prayer for fair Weather ; Part of which I shall here transcribe — “ We humbly beseech Thee, that although we *for our Iniquities* have worthily deserved a Plague of Rain and Waters ; yet, *upon our true Repentance*, Thou wilt send us such Weather, as that we may receive

Petitions that follow are perfectly clear, just, and proper ; and the Conclusion is truly pious, and breathes the genuine Spirit of Christianity.

THE Prayers for the Ember-Weeks being used but a very few Days in the Year, and scarcely ever on Sundays ^u, I think it needless to make any Observations upon them for the Generality of my Readers, who so seldom join in them. Indeed the Design and Excellency of them must appear at first Sight to every body. But should this little Tract fall into the Hands of any of our Bishops and Pastors, I would beg of them seriously to consider the great and important Trust that is committed to them by their Lord and Master, of appointing proper Persons “ to serve in the sacred Ministry of his Church ;” and how much the Glory of God,

ceive the Fruits of the Earth in due Season ; and learn both by thy *Punishment* to amend our Lives, and for thy *Clemency* to give Thee Praise and Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

^u But why should not One of these Prayers be used on the Sunday in the Ember-Weeks ? The Rubrick appoints them “ to be said *every Day*” in those Weeks ; and surely the *Lord’s Day* is a principal one.

and the Promotion of true Religion, depend on their faithful Discharge of this Part of their high Office. Let me earnestly intreat them (and I do it with all possible Humility, and with the most unfeigned Deference and Respect) often to reflect on that weighty and solemn Charge given by St. Paul to Timothy, and in him to all succeeding Governors of the Church, to LAY HANDS SUDDENLY ON NO MAN; *neither*, by so doing, to *be Partakers of other Mens Sins*. Let them think what they will have to answer for, in the great Day of Accounts, if, through their Remissness and Inattention, the Lord's Vineyard shall have been ill supplied, the Flock of Christ neglected or abused, and a Scandal brought on the Ministry, and by their Means on Religion itself. And let them ask their Consciences, how they can effectually guard against these dreadful Evils, or properly perform their Duty in this Respect, so long as they leave the Examination of Candidates for Orders to others, and suffer it to be so slight and superficial, as I fear it generally is at present. It is notorious, that Testimonials are often signed
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very improperly, which is one Reason, no Doubt, of so many Persons being admitted into the Ministry, who are very ill qualified to serve in it *. But this Evil, I am assured, might be in a great Measure prevented, if not wholly removed, would the Bishops exert themselves as they ought, in making careful and diligent Enquiry into the real Merits of the Candidates; and without any Favour or Partiality admit or reject them, according as they found them deserving, or otherwise.

The Prayer for the High Court of Parliament is not only an admirable Form of Devotion, for general Use, but affords the most excellent Instruction to the Members of that august Assembly: who should learn from

* Another Reason, which I cannot forbear mentioning, is the too general Neglect of the proper Education of Youth intended for holy Orders. Instructions in classical, mathematical, and philosophical Learning, are seldom wanting: while Lectures in Divinity (which ought to be their principal Study) are given very sparingly, and superficially. A competent Knowledge of the Languages in which the Scriptures were written, is surely a necessary Qualification for Men, who are to explain those Scriptures to others. Yet many of our Clergy, I fear, are greatly deficient in their Knowledge of one of those Languages at least, when they leave the Universities.

hence, to make “ the Advancement of God’s Glory, the Good of his Church, and the Safety, Honour, and Welfare of our Sovereign and his Kingdoms,” the constant and invariable Objects of their Deliberations. To this End they should banish from their Breasts all Considerations of private Interest, and Party-Attachment ; and above all Things avoid that Spirit of Opposition, for opposing Sake, which so unhappily prevails amongst us at present, and is productive of so many fatal Consequences. And let them always remember, that “ Peace and Happiness,” which we daily pray for, can never be obtained or preserved, without the Establishment of “ Truth and Justice, Religion and Piety :” for *Righteousness alone exalteth a Nation, but Sin is a Reproach*, and will in the End bring Ruin and Destruction, to any People. Prov. xiv. 34.—But whether our Governors and Legislators do *their* Duty or not, we must be careful not to neglect *ours* ; which is, to speak of them with Respect, to obey them with Cheerfulness, to submit to the Laws they enact, and pay the Taxes they lay upon us, with a ready and willing

willing Mind, and to pray fervently to Almighty God, that He will direct their Counsels according to his Will, and *teach our Senators Wisdom*. There is one Expression in this Prayer, which has been objected to ; and I truly think, not without Reason. It is, the Application of the Words, “ most religious and gracious,” to the ruling Prince : Titles, which belong to no Man but in a restrained and limited Sense, and can in no Sense be properly given to a wicked Man, be his Station ever so exalted. To obey, and pray for, a bad Prince, is certainly our Duty ; but to flatter him, and much more to ascribe such Titles of Praise to him in our Addresses to the Throne of Grace, is surely very unwarrantable. However, this Objection to the Prayer under Consideration no Way concerns us at present, since (blessed be God !) We may use it without any Scruple, and with the strictest Propriety ^y.

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^y Though we are told in Scripture, that *there is none good but one, that is GOD*, and that *He only is HOLY* ; yet we are justified in applying these, and the like, Epithets to Persons eminently distinguished for their Virtue and Piety ; since the Scriptures themselves so apply them. For Instance, Noah

We come now to “the Prayer for all Conditions of Men ;” which was intended in some Measure to supply the Place of the Litany, and is therefore appointed to be used, when that is not. The first Part of it is a Sort of Paraphrase on the second Petition in the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy Kingdom come ;” and the Words are taken from the 67th Psalm, which has been already explained. To pray *for all Men*, is a Duty expressly enjoined us in Scripture, being one Branch of that universal Love and Charity, which it every where so strongly inculcates : and since what

is called a *JUST Man*, and *PERFECT in his Generations*. Gen. vi. 9—Zacharias and his Wife, *RIGHTEOUS before God—and blameless*. Luke i. 6—and Barnabas a *GOOD Man*. Acts xi. 24. And the Words *just, righteous, holy*, and the like, are often used of God’s faithful Servants in general, throughout the Bible, and may therefore not improperly be so used by us ; though always, as I observed before, in a limited Sense, making due Allowances for human Frailties and Imperfections. As to Titles of mere Honour and Respect, we have an Instance in the History of St. Paul, which seems to justify the Use of them : I mean, where he calls the Roman Governor, who was an Heathen, *MOST NOBLE FESTUS*. Acts xxvi. 25. It is the very same Word in the Greek, which St. Luke uses in his Address to Theophilus, and is there translated *MOST EXCELLENT*. Luke i. 3.

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relates to the Soul is of infinitely more Consequence than what can only affect the Body, we are taught first and principally to make our Supplications to the great Lord of the Universe for the *spiritual* Welfare of the whole Race of Mankind; that by the glorious Light of the Gospel shining throughout the World, they may be brought out of Darknefs and Infidelity, and converted from the Power of Satan unto God. With what thankful Hearts ought we to offer up this Petition, when we reflect on the inestimable Happinefs we enjoy, through the undeserved Goodness of our merciful Father, of having his Will clearly revealed to us, and the Gospel preached amongst us in it's native Purity and Perfection! — Having thus prayed for the Conversion of Unbelievers, we proceed to pray, in a more especial Manner, for “the good Estate of the Catholic Church;” that is, for the whole Congregation of Christian People, wheresoever dispersed: that, by the Guidance of God's Holy Spirit, “they may be led into the Way of Truth;” from which many of them, and particularly those of the Church of Rome, are sadly departed: and
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that they may “ hold the Faith in Unity of Spirit ;” that is, that they may all agree in the sincere Belief of the grand fundamental Doctrines of our Religion ; being, as St. Paul expresses it, *perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment ;* 1 Cor. i. 10—“ in the Bond of Peace ;” in mutual Love and Charity, in godly Union and Concord, such as our blessed Lord requires, as the distinguishing Mark of his Disciples—and “ in Righteousness of Life ;” or in the Practice of universal Holiness and Virtue ; shewing the Sincerity of their Faith by the only sure Test, the Uprightness and Regularity of their Lives. How happily is this Petition adapted to the true genuine Spirit of the Gospel ! How contrary to the uncharitable, persecuting, Tenets of Popery ; as well as to the narrow Views of too many Sectaries and Enthusiasts ! How diametrically opposite to the Delusions of all those, who separate good Works from sound Faith, and vainly hope to be saved, without doing the Will of God ! — The third, and last, Part of this Prayer is a Supplication for all such as are in Affliction or Distress of whatsoever Kind

Kind it be ; that it may please God of his infinite Goodness and Mercy, “ to comfort and relieve them according to their several Necessities ; giving them Patience under their Sufferings, and an happy Issue out of all their Afflictions ” — But let us not stop here: for though to *pray for* the afflicted is one Part of our Duty towards them, it is not all. We must look upon ourselves as Instruments, in the Hands of the Almighty, to help and relieve them ; and should shew them every Sign of Kindness and Benevolence in our Power ; assisting them with our Alms, our Counsel, and Attendance, as their several Occasions may require. And while we teach others, let us not forget to practice ourselves, the great Duty of Patience and Resignation to the divine Will, under whatsoever Trials it shall please God to send us ; that so we may have a well-grounded Hope of obtaining an happy Issue out of all our Misery, and of entering into the Joy of our Lord.

The short Prayer that follows, being left to the Discretion of the Minister to use or not, as he shall think fit, is too commonly omitted. Some object to the Propriety of
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using it where it now stands, because it was at first placed after the six occasional Prayers. But surely a Supplication for Mercy and Pardon can never be unseasonable; and the Excellency of this should recommend it to our more frequent Use. We first beseech that gracious Being, "whose Nature and Property is ever to have Mercy and to forgive," favourably to "receive the Petitions," we have humbly offered up to Him; and then implore his Forgiveness of our manifold Sins, which alone can hinder the Acceptance of our Devotions. We are here reminded of what I observed to you before, and what we should never forget, that a State of Sin is truly and properly a State of Slavery; from which we now beg to be "loosed;" that is, to be delivered from the Power and Dominion, as well as from the Guilt and Punishment, of Sin. For unless we are delivered from the former, we cannot escape the latter. *I will run the Way of thy Commandments,* says holy David, *when Thou hast SET MY HEART AT LIBERTY.* And a greater than David assures us, that if we will ENTER INTO

INTO LIFE, we must KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS.

After so many Prayers to God for future Blessings, it is high Time that we return Him our most humble and hearty Thanks for those we have already received; and for his Promises of far greater, still in Reserve for us. It was surely a strange Omission in the first Compilers of our Liturgy, not to insert some general Form of Thanksgiving; but that Defect is fully made up by the admirable one now in Use, which was added at the last Review of the Common Prayer. It begins very properly with a general Acknowledgement of the "Goodness and Loving-kindness" of God "to us, and to all Men." And while we address Him as the "Father of all Mercies," we call ourselves, as we truly are, his "unworthy Servants." We then proceed to enumerate our several Obligations to Him, as our Creator, and Preserver, and the Giver of all temporal and earthly Blessings. The Enjoyments of this Life, however mean and contemptible in Comparison of those of a future State, are still of some Value, and appear the more valuable

luable for being present. The all-wise Author of our Being knows what is fit for us in every State, and dispenses his Favours accordingly. We are not therefore to despise and reject them, but to accept them with Gratitude, and use them with Moderation and Cheerfulness ; such an Use of them being by no Means inconsistent with *having our Conversation in Heaven*. But, “ above all,” we must thank God for that amazing Instance of his Love, that most “ inestimable” Blessing bestowed on us, “ in the Redemption of the World, by our Lord Jesus Christ.” When we consider our own Vileness and Sinfulness, and his transcendent Mercy and Goodness ; the Misery from which we are delivered, and the endless Glory and Happiness to which we are entitled, by this wonderful Dispensation of divine Love ; we are lost in Admiration, and can never sufficiently praise and adore the Author of our Deliverance and Salvation. *Lord ! what is Man, that Thou hast such Respect unto him ; or the Son of Man, that thou so regardest him ? —* But to proceed : we bless God, not only for our Redemption in general ; but particularly,

“ for

“for the Means of Grace,” (whereby it is made effectual to us) and “for the Hope of Glory”—Now the Means of Grace, or of obtaining the gracious Assistance of the Holy Spirit, are Prayer, the Word of God as delivered in the sacred Writings, and the two Sacraments. And whoever refuses or neglects to use these Means, must not presume to expect the End, proposed to be attained by them, even the Salvation of his Soul. Yet alas! how fatally do Men deceive themselves in this Particular! How many, that call themselves Christians, live in a total Neglect of these essential Duties of Christianity! especially of that most important of all, the Receiving the Lord’s Supper. — Strange Infatuation! To thank God for our Redemption, and at the same Time to refuse to commemorate it in the Manner our Redeemer has appointed! To thank Him for the *Means of Grace*, and never to use the principal of those Means! for the *Hope of Glory*, and never to receive the Pledge and Earnest of that Glory, tendered to us in the holy Communion! Let those, who attend the common Service of the Church, and never approach the Lord’s Table,

ble, consider, before it be too late, what an Inconsistency, and Absurdity, they are guilty of; and what an Insult it is on the divine Majesty, to thank him for Mercies, which they obstinately refuse to partake of, and to pray for Blessings, the Means of obtaining which they wilfully reject. “The Hope of Glory,” is a Phrase taken from St. Paul, Rom. viii. 24; where he says, *we are saved by Hope*: which Hope, being built on the sure Foundation of the Word and Promise of God, *who cannot lye*, amounts to a moral Assurance or *Certainty* of Glory and Salvation. But here we must be very careful to distinguish between *general* Promises, and *particular* Applications. Every Christian is certain that he *may* be saved; but no one can be certain that he *shall*. The best may *fall*; and if he do not recover himself, and return to his Duty, he is undone for ever. The Expression, therefore, our Church has made use of, is most happily chosen; to encourage our Hope, and at the same Time to prevent our Presumption.—Having thus offered up our Praises and Thanksgivings to Almighty God, we conclude with an humble (Petition to
Him,

Him, that He will preserve in our Hearts a due and lively Sense of “all his Mercies;” and that he will enable us, by his Grace, to shew the Sincerity of our Gratitude by the uniform Holiness of our Lives. Hence we should learn, that the Love of God, and a grateful Sense of our Obligations to Him, are the best and noblest Principles of Obedience; which we should cultivate and cherish by frequent Meditations on his Love and Goodness to us. And, above all Things we should take Heed not to offer Him the Sacrifice of our Lips, while our Hearts are far from Him; nor to fancy that our Hearts are with Him, unless we “give up ourselves *intirely* to his Service, and walk before Him in Holiness and Righteousness *all our Days.*”

The Creed of Saint Athanasius.

Whether this Creed was written by the Person, whose Name it bears, or by some other, it is by no Means material to enquire. To form a right Judgment of the Value of

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this, or of any other human Composition, we should try it by the unerring Rule of Scripture: and if it be found agreeable thereto, let it be approved; if otherwise, rejected. This is the only sure Test of divine Truth; and how well this Creed will bear to be examined by it, I shall endeavour to make appear in the following View of it.—The Design of the Author, whoever he was, in compiling it, was to furnish the Church with a plain and clear Account of the grand Doctrines of the ever-blessed Trinity, and the Incarnation of Christ; in Opposition to the gross Errors and Heresies, which had been maintained and propagated, with great Zeal and Industry, by the Enemies of the true Faith. For, as the Apostles had long before foretold, *false Teachers* crept into the Church, and *privily brought in damnable Heresies, denying the Lord that bought them* — even the *only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* 2 Pet. ii. 1 — and Jude 4. As these spread their Poison, it became necessary to provide an Antidote; for which Purpose it was wisely ordered that Creeds, or Summaries

ries of the Christian Faith, should be drawn up, and published, for general Use, to guard and defend the great Articles of Religion against the Arts and Malice of the Enemy, who lay in wait to deceive, and employed every Stratagem to undermine them. And to oppose these Heretics the more effectually, it was found expedient to be more full and particular in stating and explaining the Doctrines they attacked, than had been usual or necessary in the earlier and purer Ages of Christianity. Hence Creeds became more numerous, and enlarged, and some Terms were introduced, not perhaps strictly scriptural, in order to illustrate the Doctrines of Scripture, and to obviate the false Glosses, and perverse Interpretations, of Heretics. Of these Creeds none has been more generally, and deservedly, received and esteemed, than that which bears the Title of St. Athanasius's; which our Church has adopted into her Liturgy, as a Standard of the true Faith, which all her Members may have Recourse to, and which they are all directed publicly to repeat on particular Festivals. An Injunction, which surely we ought to comply with;

since it is an Acknowledgment, and Declaration, of our holding fast that Faith, into which we were baptized; as, on the other Hand, to refuse to repeat it, is a tacit Denial of it. How shameful then is the Practice of those Ministers, who omit reading it on the Days when it is appointed to be used, out of a false Notion of complying with the Scruples of weak Brethren, and avoiding to give Offence*: since by this Means they encourage and confirm Men in their Doubts and Errors, and seem to give up those great Articles of Faith, which they have solemnly promised to defend and maintain. Besides, what an Inconsistency and Absurdity is it, either

* A tender Regard for Persons of weak Minds and scrupulous Consciences is certainly not only allowable, but highly Praise-worthy. In all Matters of *Indifference* we cannot be too complying and indulgent. As the Apostle teaches, *it is good neither to eat Flesh, nor to drink Wine, nor any Thing, (not to do any Thing, be it ever so innocent in itself, or be we ever so thoroughly convinced of it's Innocency and Propriety) whereby thy Brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.* Rom. xiv. 21. But where an essential Article of Faith is concerned, no Concessions must be made, to gratify the doubtful or unbelieving. Even Silence in this Case is criminal; for not to confess, is tacitly to deny it. And with respect to the Athanasian Creed,

either in Clergy or Laity, to scruple using this Creed, and yet to join in the Rest of the Church-Service; wherein the Doctrines of the Trinity, and Incarnation, are plainly and fully asserted? Do not we ascribe Glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, several Times in our daily Worship? Do not we pray to them, distinctly and jointly, in the Litany? Do not we profess our Belief in them, both in the Apostles', and Nicene Creed? Do not we, in all these Cases, own and declare each Person to be, truly and properly, God and Lord? And what do we more in the Creed of St. Athanasius?—But let us examine it more particularly.—

“Whosoever will be saved, before all Things it is necessary, that he hold the Catholic Faith.”—That Faith and Obedience are both

Creed, which it is become fashionable to omit in many Places, I would desire the Clergy to consider, how offensive this Omission must be to the orthodox Part of their Congregation, who are thereby deprived of an Opportunity of professing their Faith publicly, in the Manner the Church has directed. And I would ask them, Whether is it more reasonable, to offend these by an irregular Omission; or to disgust the heterodox by reading what they are commanded?—A proper Explanation of this Creed, especially of the damnatory Clauses in it, sometimes from the Pulpit, would be of infinite Service, and in a great Measure remove the Scruples about repeating it.

absolutely and indispensably requisite to our Salvation, is a Truth so clearly revealed to us in the Bible, that it is impossible for any Person, who ever read it without Prejudice, to mistake it. And as Faith naturally comes before Practice, it is therefore here said to be necessary "before all Things"—not as if it were of more Value than Obedience, or of any Value at all, separated from it; but on Account of it's being the Principle, or Foundation, on which our Obedience must be built. It is therefore a most ridiculous Thing to dispute, whether Faith or good Works be more important or necessary, since the Word of God assures us they are both equally so; that is, where we have the Means of believing afforded us^a. And what He hath
joined

^a Our Creed has nothing to do with the Case of invincible Ignorance or Unbelief. It is addressed to those only who have the Means of believing afforded them, and on whom the glorious Light of the Gospel shines. — What will be the Condition of the Heathen World in a future State, we presume not to determine. This we know, that they are in the Hands of a good and merciful God, who will judge all Mankind with perfect Justice and Equity. All farther Enquiries and Conjectures on this Head are vain and presumptuous. When our blessed Lord was asked, *Are there few that*
be

joined together, let no Man put asunder.—
 The Word, “ Catholic,” as I before observed, signifies *universal*; so that “ the Catholic Faith,” here mentioned, is the Faith or Doctrine of the *universal* Church, founded on Scripture; in Opposition to the erroneous Tenets of *particular* Persons, or Sects, which we commonly call Heresies.—
 “ Which Faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without Doubt he shall perish everlastingly.” — This may seem harsh and severe; and indeed has been objected to by some well-meaning Persons, who have firmly believed the Doctrine of the Trinity. But if it be no more than a plain Paraphrase on the Words of Scripture, surely the Objection is groundless. Let us hear what our blessed Saviour himself says: and his Authority, I hope, no one will dispute. HE THAT BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED SHALL BE

be saved? instead of satisfying the Enquirer’s Curiosity, He exhorts both him, and others that were present, to take Care that *they* be found in that Number: *Strive (x) to enter in at the strait Gate.* Luke xiii. 23, 25. And to a Question of St. Peter, equally curious and impertinent, He replies, *What is that to Thee?* FOLLOW THOU ME. John xvi. 22.

SAVED; BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED. Mark xvi. 16. — In other Words, “ shall perish everlastingly.” Is there then any Thing unscriptural, or uncharitable, in this Clause of the Creed, about which such a Clamour has been raised ! Or shall we be afraid of assenting to the Truth of what our Saviour has declared in the plainest Terms imaginable ? We do not hereby *wish* Damnation to any one. Far otherwise ; we rather exercise a Branch of Christian Charity, in warning our Brethren of the Danger and dreadful Consequences of Unbelief, and reminding them of the first Step to Salvation, which is Faith ; as it is every where declared to be throughout the Gospel. But this Denunciation of God’s Punishment, as it stands in the Creed, seems not barely levelled against *Unbelief*, but principally against such as *deprave* and *corrupt* the Christian Faith, by broaching false Doctrines ; for that, I apprehend, is to be understood by *not* “ *keeping it whole and undefiled.*” And if *not to believe* the Truth is (as our Lord assures us) a damnable Sin, What must be the Guilt of those who draw others

others into it, and propagate Heresy, and Infidelity, far and wide, by their pernicious Writings and Discourses? Surely we may suppose, without any Breach of Charity, that they SHALL RECEIVE GREATER DAMNATION. — But to proceed — “And the Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.” — The Doctrine of the Trinity is doubtless the first, and fundamental, Article of our Faith; and for a Christian to deny it, is the greatest Contradiction that can be. For to such we may well apply the Words of St. Paul; *Unto what then were ye baptized?* The Form of Baptism, as prescribed by our Saviour himself, is a plain Acknowledgment of the Doctrine of the Trinity; that is, of Three divine Persons, distinguished by the Titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, constituting One divine Being or Nature, which we call God. To be baptized into the Name of these THREE, is to acknowledge their divine Power and Dominion over us, and to dedicate ourselves to them, as the Object of our Faith, Hope, and Worship. Agreeably hereto, we are told, that “the Catholic

Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity;" that is, as distinguished by Three Persons; and "Trinity in Unity;" that is, Three Persons united in One God: The Word TRINITY signifying nothing more than THREE; so that to object to the Use of this Word, because it is not found in Scripture, is most absurd. It is the *Doctrine*, not the *Word*, we contend for; and if THREE divine Persons, or Agents, are mentioned, as they are throughout the Bible, and at the same Time we are told, that there is but ONE GOD; we cannot, I think, express this Doctrine more properly than by the Words TRINITY and UNITY. As to the Proofs of this great Article of our Faith, they are so numerous, and so clear and obvious to every impartial and unprejudiced Reader of the Bible, that I shall not recite them. The Argument drawn from our Baptism is strong and conclusive; and the more it is weighed and considered, the more convincing it will appear. Besides, the Names, Attributes, and Acts, of the Deity are so often ascribed to the Son and Holy Spirit throughout both the Old and New Testament, particularly
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in the latter, as to leave no Doubt of the Divinity of their Nature; since God, who has declared, that *He will not give his Glory to another*, would never have thus dignified the highest of created Beings. For further Evidence I beg Leave to refer my Reader to that masterly Performance of the reverend, and truly pious, Mr. Jones ^b, who has treated this Subject in the clearest and most instructive Manner possible.—The Creed, having stated the Doctrine in general Terms, goes on to particular Illustrations and Cautions; which the Arts and Subtilties of Heretics had rendered necessary. And first, “Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance.”—This Clause is levelled against the Sabellians on one Hand, who allowed of no Distinction of Persons in the divine Being; and the Arians on the other, who impiously taught, that the Son and Holy Ghost were of a different Nature from the Father, thereby “dividing the *Substance*”—Which Word, in this, as well as in

^b The present very worthy Rector of Pluckley, in Kent; which Living was given him by the late Archbishop Secker, as a Reward for his excellent Writings in Defence of the Christian Faith.

the Nicene Creed, means precisely the same as *Nature*. In Contradiction to both these Heresies, it is asserted, that "there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost;" but that "the Godhead," or divine Nature, of these three Persons "is all one;" and consequently, "the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal." — The Use of the Word *Person*, in speaking of the divine Being, has been excepted to as unscriptural: and very true it is, that the Word is no where so applied in Scripture*. But still this is only cavilling about Words. What we mean by it is, to express that Distinction of three *Agents*, comprised under one divine Nature, which the Scripture so often speaks of, and which we believe on the Testimony of Scripture, though we do not pretend to comprehend or explain it. — All we insist on is, that each divine Person is truly and properly God — "Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost." — Several At-

* Except, perhaps, Heb. i. 3. where the Son is called *the express Image of his Father's Person*: though the Word in the Greek is different from what is commonly used for *Person*.

tributes,

tributes, or Properties, of the divine Nature are then applied to each ; such as, being “ uncreate, incomprehensible, eternal, and almighty.” These, being essential to the Divinity, are common to each divine Person : yet, to prevent any false Conclusion from the Application of them to each distinctly, we are taught that, properly speaking, there is but “ ONE uncreated, ONE incomprehensible, ONE eternal, ONE Almighty ; ONE God, and ONE Lord.” — The Word, “ incomprehensible,” in this Place, does not signify beyond our Comprehension, or what we cannot comprehend, or understand (though in that Sense it will hold true in respect to the Deity, who to our finite Capacities is really incomprehensible) but, as it is in the Original, *boundless*, or *omnipresent*. So Christ is said to *fill all in all*. Ephes. i. 22. And in those Words of the Psalmist, *Whither shall I go then from thy SPIRIT ?* &c. (Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8,) the Omnipresence of the Holy Ghost is expressly asserted. — In the following Verses of the Creed, we meet with two Expressions, which at first Sight may seem to be put in Opposition

position to each other, but which in Reality mean one and the same Thing — “the Christian Verity ;” and “ the Catholic Religion.” — The Christian *Verity* is, in other Words, the Christian *Truth*, or the *true Doctrine* of the Gospel of Christ ; and the Catholic Religion is the Religion of the Catholic or universal Church, founded on the *Truth of the Gospel*. The Romish Church, as I observed before, has no Pretensions to this Title of Catholic or Universal ; nor has it any Thing to do with this Clause in our Creed. — The plain Meaning of it is, that the true Christian Doctrine, which the Church teaches and maintains, *compels*, or obliges, us to acknowledge every Person in the Trinity “ by himself” (that is, *distinctly considered*) “ to be God and Lord :” and yet *forbids* us to call them, “ three Gods, or three Lords.”

The Union and Equality of the three divine Persons being thus asserted, we are in the next Place instructed in the Nature of their personal Distinction, or Mode of Existence — “ The Father is made of none : neither created, nor begotten :” that is, He is strictly and properly *unoriginate*. —

“The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created, but begotten.” This Term is peculiar to the Son: who is called by St. John, *the ONLY-BEGOTTEN of the Father*; Ch. i. 14. and in other Places.—The Holy Ghost is distinguished from both the Father and the Son by “Proceeding:” which Word is applied to Him by our Saviour, John xv. 26. And He is said to be “of the Father, and of the Son;” and He is often called in Scripture *the Spirit of God*, and sometimes *the Spirit of Christ*, and *the Spirit of his Son*. Rom. viii. 9, Gal. iv. 6, &c. and is represented as being *sent* to us by the Father, and the Son.—“So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts;” that is, there is a Distinction of Persons, every where taught in Scripture; (each taking upon him a distinct Part, or Office, in the Oeconomy of Grace, and Man’s Salvation) which therefore we are by no Means to confound. But whatever Difference, or Subordination, there may be in this Respect, yet, with regard to their divine Nature or Essence, “none is afore or after
other :

other : none is greater or less than another^d — the Notion of a *superior*, “and *inferior*, Deity being repugnant to the Doctrine of *one divine Being*. — “But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal;” and, as the next Verse declares, the joint Object of our Faith, and Worship. — “He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity” — must believe in the one only living and true God, *besides whom there is no Saviour*; as He is revealed to us by the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; not attempting to explain what is inexplicable, or disputing about what we cannot fully comprehend, but humbly adoring that almighty and merciful Being, his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier: whom we now *see only through a Glass darkly*, but shall hereafter *see Face to Face*; whom we now *know only in Part*, and imperfectly, but whom we shall *then know, even as we are known*.

^d There is certainly no Inconsistency in an *Equality of essential Glory and Perfection*; and an *Inferiority, or Subordination*, with respect to *Office, or Ministry*, in bringing about the great and mysterious Work of Man's Redemption.

From the Doctrine of the Trinity the Creed passes on to that of "the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ:" the right Belief of which it declares to be "necessary to everlasting Salvation." — The Word, "Incarnation," though not to be met with in Scripture, expresses precisely what we read there in other Words; even that *great Mystery of Godliness*, as the Apostle calls it, GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH. 1 Tim. iii. 16. With an Account of this wonderful Dispensation St. John begins his Gospel *; declaring that the WORD, or the Son of God, who *was in the Beginning with God, and was God; by whom all Things were made; in whom was Life, &c.* (all which Expressions he uses to shew his true and proper Divinity) that this same divine Person WAS MADE FLESH,

* As he does likewise his first Epistle; where is a plain Account of the two Natures in Christ, in the 1st, 2d, and 3d Verses. — *That which was FROM THE BEGINNING—the WORD of LIFE — that ETERNAL LIFE which was with the Father*—are Expressions that clearly point out his Divinity: while the others, *which we have HEARD, which we have SEEN with our Eyes—and our Hands have HANDLED, &c.* are equally descriptive of his Humanity.

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OR WAS INCARNATE, and *dwelt among us*, &c.: that is, He who was truly God, by taking our Nature upon Him, became truly Man; *being made in all Things like unto his Brethren*, Sin only excepted. This Doctrine, as well as that of the Trinity, having been denied by some Heretics, and greatly depraved and corrupted by others, the Author of our Creed judged it necessary to state it in the clearest Terms possible; keeping close to the Sense of Scripture, and guarding it carefully against all false Glosses and wrong Interpretations. And if we duly consider the great Importance of this grand Article of our Faith, on which is built the whole Scheme of our Redemption and Salvation, we cannot but acknowledge the Wisdom of our Church in retaining this excellent Defence of it, in the Creed now before us:—"For the right Faith is, that we believe and *confess*" (to *believe* only, without a public *Confession* of our Belief, is by no Means sufficient; see Rom. x. 10) "that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is GOD and MAN." So He is described to us from the Beginning of the Bible

Bible to the End : the very Words, God, and MAN, are often expressly applied to Him ; and the various Attributes, and Properties, both of the divine, and human, Nature, are ascribed to Him in numberless Passages. But the Malice of Satan would not suffer either the Divinity, or Humanity, of the Saviour of the World to pass unquestioned. For while some Heretics have denied Him to be truly God, others have disputed his being truly Man. Against both these, our Creed asserts, that He is “ God, of the *Substance* of the Father, begotten before the Worlds ” — that is, of the same *Nature* with the Father (which indeed the Word *begotten*, applied to Him in Scripture, plainly implies) — “ and Man, of the Substance of his Mother, born in the World ” — that is, truly and properly Man, formed in the Womb of the Virgin Mary his Mother ; of her *Substance*, or *Nature*. In which Manner of Speaking we are

^f Our Church, in her second Article, has it ; “ begotten from Everlasting ” — which Manner of speaking is taken from that famous Prophecy of our Saviour in Micah, where it is said of Him ; *whose Goings forth have been from of Old, from EVERLASTING.* Mic. v. 2.

fully justified by the clear and exprefs Words of the Apostle ; who tells us, that *our Lord* was MADE OF THE SEED OF DAVID, *according to the Flesh*. Rom. i. 3.—and in another Place, that *God sent forth his Son*, MADE OF A WOMAN. Gal. iv. 4. He is therefore “PERFECT GOD” — not a mere nominal, official, created God ; as some Heretics have most profanely, and absurdly, represented Him — “and PERFECT MAN” — not a bare Shadow, or Appearance, of a Man, or clothed with an human Body only, without a Soul ; as others have impiously maintained ; but really and truly Man ; “of a reasonable Soul, and human Flesh subsisting” — consisting of Soul and Body, like other Men.—“Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead ;”—or in respect to his divine Nature, in which there can be no Difference, or Inequality, without supposing two different Gods, which is false and absurd ; “and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood” — that is, as to his human Nature, in respect to which He himself declares, that *his Father is GREATER than He*. John xiv. 28. “Who although He be God, and Man ; yet He is
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not two, but one Christ;” “two whole and perfect Natures being (as our Church expresses it in her second Article) joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is ONE CHRIST.” — So that we are not to consider Him barely as God, or Man, in one Nature abstractedly from the other; but in both jointly, as GOD INCARNATE. To give us a just and right Notion of this wonderful Union of the two Natures in Christ, and to guard us against the wild and extravagant Fancies of some antient Heretics relating to this Doctrine, the Creed informs us, that He is “ONE; not by Conversion of the Godhead into Flesh” (for the divine Nature, being perfectly unchangeable, could not possibly be altered, or turned into any other) “but by taking of the Manhood into God”—that is, by assuming human Nature, and uniting it to the divine. “One altogether; not by Confusion of Substance;” not by confounding two Natures together, as some would insinuate; “but by Unity of Person”—that is, by joining or uniting them in one Person. — “For, as the reasonable Soul and Flesh is one Man; so God

and Man is one Christ." This Simile, or Comparison (the only one our Author has ventured to introduce into his Creed) may serve to give us some faint Idea, however inadequate, of the mysterious Union of the two Natures in our blessed Saviour: at least thus much we may learn from it, not to deny or disbelieve any Article of Faith, because we cannot fully comprehend it; nor to reject a Doctrine as contradictory or impossible, because we cannot explain it: for according to that Way of reasoning we may believe nothing. How can we account for, or explain, the Manner of our living, our moving, or thinking? Yet shall we, therefore, deny that we live, move, and think? So in regard to the Union of Soul and Body; how it is effected, I am sure the wisest Man living cannot explain: but that they are so united, cannot be denied. That two such different and contrary Substances as Spirit and Matter should be so closely and intimately joined together in the human Species, never to be separated till Death, and to be reunited at the general Resurrection, and so to remain to all Eternity, is to our short-sighted and imperfect

Faculties

Faculties truly amazing and unaccountable; but still there is nothing in it impossible, or contradictory; nothing but what the wisest and most learned Persons, as well as the ignorant and illiterate, firmly believe. And if we thus assent to an undoubted Truth, relating to our own Nature, though we cannot fully comprehend, or explain it; surely we ought not to dispute against what the Word of God reveals to us concerning the divine Nature, and it's Union with ours, however it may exceed our Capacities to understand it. We should rather admire and adore *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery; even the hidden Wisdom, which God ordained before the World unto our Glory, and to accomplish our Salvation.* 1 Cor. ii. 7. For this End did the blessed Jesus *make himself of no Reputation*, that is, (as it should rather have been translated) *He emptied, or divested Himself of his divine Glory, in order to bring us to Glory; and was made in the Likeness of Men*—that is, He took on him the Nature of Man, *degrading himself to the lowest and most abject Condition of Humanity, that He might make us the Children*

of God, and *exalt us* to everlasting Life, *And being found in Fashion as a Man, He humbled himself still farther, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross,* 1 Phil. ii. 7, &c. As the Creed goes on to inform us, He “suffered for our Salvation, descended into Hell, rose again the third Day from the dead; He ascended into Heaven; He sitteth on the Right Hand of the Father, God Almighty: from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.”—All these Particulars have been already discoursed on, in treating of the Apostles’ Creed.—“At whose Coming all Men shall rise again with their Bodies.”—The Words, “all Men,” are inserted, to shew that the Resurrection shall be *general, both of the just and unjust*, in Opposition to those who fancied there should be only a *partial* Resurrection; and “*with their Bodies,*” is added, against those false Teachers, who maintained that the Soul alone should exist to Eternity, without any Body joined to it; or that our Bodies at the Resurrection should be made of new Materials, instead of being formed out of those in which we are
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now clothed. The Change indeed shall be great and wonderful ; for, as the Apostle teaches, *this corruptible must put on Incorruption, and this mortal put on Immortality.* 1 Cor. xv. 53. — But still it is THIS, THIS SAME, *natural* Body, that shall be *raised a spiritual Body* ; as the Grain of Corn, that is sown, produces it's proper and respective Stalk.— And, as the same Apostle tells us in another Epistle, our *Lord Jesus Christ shall CHANGE our vile Bodies* (not create new ones) *that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious Body,* &c. Phil. iii. 20, 21.—And, as the Resurrection, so the Judgment also, shall be universal. *All Men*, thus risen, “ shall give Account for their own Works. And they that have done Good shall go into Life everlasting : and they that have done Evil into everlasting Fire.”—This Article, though the most important and interesting of all, needs no Explanation. The Eternity of future Rewards and Punishments is here taught in the Words of Scripture ; where it is the very same Word in the Original, (which we translate first *everlasting*, and then *eternal*) that is applied to both. Matt. xxv,

46 : and the Words *everlasting Fire* are expressly mentioned by our Saviour in the same Chapter, when he speaks of the Punishment of the *Wicked*, or CURSED, Ver. 41. —*Depart from me*, says He, *ye CURSED, into EVERLASTING FIRE, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* We are now come to the End of our Creed, which concludes, as it began, by asserting the Necessity of Faith in order to Salvation —“ This is the Catholic Faith, which except a Man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.” As if it had been said : “ This is the Sum and Substance of the true Doctrine of the Gospel, of that *Faith, which was once delivered unto the Saints*, and which the Catholic or Universal Church still teaches ; which if a Man believes faithfully and sincerely, and lives suitably to that Belief, he shall be saved—but if he wilfully and obstinately refuses to believe, we condemn him not by any Judgment of our own, we wish him no Evil, but heartily pray for his Conversion and Salvation ; referring him to the Words of our blessed Saviour, which we dare not dispute or elude ; HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT, SHALL BE DAMNED.

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I would now ask any unprejudiced Person, if there is any Thing in this Creed, fairly and rightly interpreted, that is severe, unchristian, or uncharitable; or that we should scruple to assent to, and repeat. If you believe the Doctrine of the Trinity, into which Belief you have been baptized, you must think it an *essential* and *fundamental* Article of Christian Faith. If you acknowledge Christ as your Saviour and Redeemer, you must believe Him to be both GOD and MAN: for the Scripture (from whence only you can have your Knowledge of Salvation through Him) declare Him so to be, in the plainest Terms possible. BESIDES ME, says God himself, THERE IS NO SAVIOUR. Is. xliii. 11: but Christ is called OUR SAVIOUR: therefore He is GOD. The Reality of his human Nature, which had been so plainly pointed out in the Prophecies concerning Him, the whole History of his Life and Death fully evinces. Therefore He is *both God and Man*; or, as we say, *God incarnate*. You must then allow the Doctrine of his INCARNATION to be another *essential* Article of Faith.

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That Faith is necessary to Salvation, the Scripture every where teaches, and our Saviour expressly affirms : therefore those Articles are necessary to be believed. This is all we contend for ; and all that we do in Effect declare, when we repeat the Athanasian Creed.—It is the great fundamental Doctrines of our Religion, not any human System, or Explanation of them, which we insist upon as necessary to be believed. To the Scriptures we appeal, as the infallible Word of God ; and what He has been graciously pleased to reveal to us therein we must believe, under Pain of Damnation. The best of human Writings are imperfect ; and nothing they contain is to be believed any further, than as it can be proved from Scripture. The Doctrines of the Trinity and Incarnation are clearly proved from thence, and *therefore* are to be believed. — It is not on the Authority of Athanasius, or of the Writer of this or any other Creed ; it is not on the Authority of Councils, or Fathers, or Churches, that we build our Faith ; but on the Authority of God. This Creed, like all other uninspired Compositions, may,
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and must, have its Imperfections^s: yet, on the Whole, we look upon it to be an excellent Summary, and Vindication, of the true Christian Faith; and therefore we retain it. “And” (to use the Words of the late learned Doctor *Waterland*, with which I shall conclude this Article) “so long as there shall be any Men left to oppose the Doctrines which this Creed contains, so long will it be *expedient*, and even *necessary*, to continue the *Use* of it—and I suppose, when we have none remaining to find Fault with the Doctrines, there will be none to object against the *Use* of the Creed, or so much as to wish to have it laid aside.”

^s The most plausible Objection to it is, that every Word and Phrase in it is not strictly *scriptural*. But if there are very few that are not, and if those few are agreeable to the *Sense* and *Doctrine* of Scripture, surely this Objection^s should be waved, in Consideration of the excellent Use of it, as a Defence of the true Faith against the Arts and Subtilties of Heretics of various Denominations. If we look into the Writings of our modern Divines on the Subject of the Trinity, we shall find in most of them many more unscriptural Terms, and scholastic Niceties, than are to be met with in this Creed.

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The Litany.

The Litany, or general Supplication, as the Word signifies, and as it is also called in the Rubric before it, was originally designed as a distinct Service by itself, and has been often so used; though it is now made a Part of the common Service in our Church on *Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays*. It is in a quite different Form from the rest of the Prayers, which are offered up solely by the Minister, the People only saying Amen at the End of each; whereas this Office is, as it were, the joint Supplication of the whole Congregation; the greater Part of it indeed to be repeated by the Minister singly, but the latter Portion of each Sentence to be said by the People; and some few intire Sentences to be repeated by them after him. This Way of diversifying our Devotions is very judiciously contrived, to keep up our Attention, and prevent Fatigue. In long Prayers our Thoughts are too apt to wander, unless
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we are extremely careful, and devout: but in such short Petitions, as most of those in the Litany are, wherein we take a Share ourselves, a lesser Degree of Care will suffice to keep our Minds properly fixed; so that any Inattention here is wholly inexcusable. The Use of Litanies is of great Antiquity in the Christian Church: ours is extracted from the best and most antient ones now extant, and must be allowed to be an admirable and compleat Form of true Christian Devotion. It begins with a solemn and humble Address to the ever-blessed Trinity; first to each Person distinctly, and then to all jointly; wherein we acknowledge our Sinfulness and Misery, and implore the divine Mercy and Pardon. And first, we call upon God the Father, “the Father of Heaven^h,” or our heavenly Father, who so loved
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^h These Words, “of Heaven,” are here used as characteristic of the Person of the Father, who is always represented to us in Scripture as having his peculiar Residence in Heaven; whereas the Son has dwelt among us visibly on Earth, and the Holy Spirit is spoken of as dwelling in the Hearts of the Faithful in this World; though with respect to their Nature or Essence they are omnipresent, and consequently in Heaven,
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the World, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that the World through Him might be saved; and who hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts, to sanctify, and qualify us for that Salvation. In the next Place we invoke "God the Son," as "Redeemer of the World;" who also loved us, and gave Himself for us, and hath redeemed us to God by his Blood. And lastly, we pray to "God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son;" who, though represented to us as being sent forth by them, does still, by Virtue of his divine Nature, as well as Office, act with full and supreme Authority; dividing, and distributing, to every Man his blessed Gifts and Graces, severally, AS HE WILL. 1 Cor. xii. 11. — Having thus addressed each Person singly, we renew our Supplications to them all together; to the "Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity,

as well as the Father. On this Account our Saviour, in his Discourse with Nicodemus, speaking of Himself, says; *He that CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, even the Son of Man WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. John iii. 13. The Expression is very remarkable; and, like many others in the same Gospel, point-blank against the Socinian Heresy.*

Three

three Persons and one God" — perfect in Holiness, Bliss, and Glory: who has graciously promised to make all those Partakers of his Happiness, who are truly sensible of their own Wretchedness, and fly unto Him for Mercy. Let us all therefore earnestly and devoutly cry out, "Have Mercy upon us miserable Sinners!" After this Invocation, or general Petition for Mercy, we proceed to what are commonly called the *Deprecations*; which Word signifies, a Supplication for *Deliverance* from Evil. And this Part of the Litany is all addressed to the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God; whom we are directed to *honour, even as we honour the Father*, and whom *all the Angels of God* are commanded to *worship*. In what admirable Expressions of Lowliness and Humility, in what affecting and devout Language, do we open our Suit for Mercy and Forgiveness! "Remember not, Lord, our Offences, nor the Offences of our Forefathers; neither take Thou Vengeance of our Sins." — To *remember Sin*, is a Scripture-Phrase, signifying the same as to *punish*, or take Vengeance for it: consequently,

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quently, *not to remember it*, is to forbear Punishment, or to *pardon* it. The Expression is figurative, like many others; but the Meaning is plain. *I will forgive their Iniquity*, says the Lord, speaking of the new Covenant, *and I will REMEMBER their Sin no more.* Jer. xxxi. 34. Of like Import is that Expression in Ezekiel; where, declaring God's Mercy to the penitent and returning Sinner, he says, *All his Transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be MENTIONED unto him.* Ezek. xviii. 22. Whereas, when a righteous Man relapses into a Course of Sin, the Lord says, by the same Prophet, *He shall die in his Sin, and his Righteousness which he hath done shall not be REMEMBERED.* Ch. iii. 20. When therefore we say, "Remember not, Lord, our Offences;" we pray in Effect, that He will *forgive us our Trespases*: which Petition we must never offer up, but with a sincere Resolution and Promise of forgiving those *that have trespassed against us.* How foolish and ridiculous then is that Distinction, which some Persons pretend to make, between *forgiving* and *forgetting*, the Offences of their Brethren. To say "they can *forgive*, but cannot

cannot *forget*," may be true in the strict literal Meaning of the Words; but will never hold good in a Christian or moral Sense: and they who are so fond of making the Distinction, I fear, are as little disposed to *forgive*, as they are to *forget*. The Forgiveness required of us in the Gospel is not an empty, verbal, formal, Profession of Forgiveness; but it must come *from our Hearts*. Matt. xviii. 35; must be sincere, and productive of real Acts of Kindness to the offending Party; if we hope to be forgiven by our offended God. If you say, "I cannot forget an Injury;" it is so far true, that you cannot absolutely blot it out of your Mind: but you may forbear to dwell upon it, at least to reflect on it with any Degree of Resentment; you may refrain from upbraiding the Offender with it, and from publishing it to others; you may suppress every wicked Motion of your Heart towards Revenge; and, what is most material of all, you may exercise the same Humanity and Benevolence towards him, as if he had never offended. This is, truly and properly, to *forget* and *forgive*; and thus ought we to be disposed, when we join in that Petition;

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"Remember

“Remember not, Lord, our Offences” — It follows; “nor the Offences of our Forefathers:” which is taken from the 79th Psalm, ver. 8. *O remember not against us FORMER Iniquities*; or, as it is rendered in the Margin, *the Iniquities of them that were BEFORE us*. In the second Commandment God Almighty speaks of Himself, as *visiting the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation*: and the like Expressions we meet with in many other Places of Scripture. Yet we are told elsewhere, that *THE SOUL THAT SINNETH, IT SHALL DIE: the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, &c.* Ezek. xviii. 20.— If it be asked, how we reconcile these seemingly contradictory Assertions; the Answer, I think, is plain. Whenever God denounces Punishment against any Persons for the Sins of others, whether it be of their Ancestors or Contemporaries, we are always to understand by it some *temporal* Punishment, or *national* Calamity; in which the righteous and the wicked are oftentimes equally involved. But when He declares, that every Man shall bear *his own* Iniquity, and die for *his own* Sin (as
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in the Passage above-cited) I apprehend He refers chiefly to the future and eternal Punishment of Sin in the next Life; wherein none shall suffer for the Offences of others, but *God will render to every Man according to his own Deeds.* Rom. ii. 6. When therefore we pray, that God will “not remember the Offences of our Forefathers,” we must confine our Thoughts to *temporal* Evils and Judgments; which we beseech Him not to send upon us for *their* Sins, any more than for *our own*. — The more material Part of our Supplications comes next; “neither take Thou Vengeance of *our Sins*.” When *Vengeance* is ascribed to God, (as it sometimes is in Scripture, particularly Ps. xciv. 1, where it is twice repeated, *to whom VENGEANCE belongeth*; and Nahum i. 2, *the Lord REVENGETH — and will take VENGEANCE on his Adversaries*) we are not to suppose, that the all-perfect Being, who is intirely free from Passions of every Kind, is actuated by Anger or Revenge, as we frail Mortals are. It is only a Way of speaking adapted to our Capacities, intended to denote the Justice, and Certainty, of his Punishment for Sins unrepented of.

And since no Repentance of our's can merit, or give us any Claim to, Forgiveness; we beseech our God and Saviour to "spare us," not for our own Sakes, but as having been "redeemed with his most precious Blood;" and *on that Account* we pray, that He will "not be angry with us *for ever*" — that, whatever Punishments He may be pleased to inflict upon us in *this Life*, He will "not deliver us into the bitter Pains of ETERNAL DEATH." And let the whole Congregation humbly and devoutly say, "Spare us, good Lord!"

The following Petitions for Deliverance from Evil are often read very improperly, as if the Minister's Part were compleat of itself, and the People's Answer quite distinct from it: whereas they make up but one entire Sentence together; and accordingly, at the End of each of the former Portions, instead of a full Stop, there is only a Comma; which shews how they ought to be read, and how ridiculous it is to let the Voice fall, as if the Sense were compleat without the petitionary Part in the Responses. — Our blessed Lord having commanded us to pray to be "delivered from Evil," we begin our De-
precations

precations by beseeching Him to deliver us
 “ from all Evil and Mischief” *in general*;
 whether it respects our Bodies or Souls; our
 present Life or the next. We then proceed
 to *Particulars*: and forasmuch as our spiritual
 Concerns are of infinitely greater Importance
 to us than our temporal, we begin with those;
 and beg to be delivered “ from Sin,” the
 Source and Origin of all Evil: from which,
 as the Son of Sirach excellently admonishes,
 we should *flee as from the Face of a Serpent*;
for the Teeth thereof are as the Teeth of a
Lion, slaying the Souls of Men: and all Ini-
quity is as a two-edged Sword, the Wounds
whereof cannot be healed. Ecclus. xxi. 2.
 And since the Devil is the Author and Pro-
 moter of Sin, we next pray for Deliverance
 from his “ Crafts and Assaults;” from his
 secret Stratagems and Devices, as well as from
 his open Attacks. With respect to the for-
 mer, he is represented to us in Scripture as a
Serpent, full of Art and Subtlety; to the lat-
 ter, as a *roaring Lion*, seeking whom he may
devour. Of the “ Crafts,” or *Wiles*, of the
 Devil I shall have Occasion to speak here-
 after. By his “ Assaults,” as distinguished

from them, I conceive we are to understand those more open and violent Modes of Temptation, whereby he drives, and hurries, us into Sin: as when he takes Advantage of the Impetuosity of our Lusts and Passions, and makes them the Engines of his furious Onsets. But however formidable his Power, or deep his Cunning, may be, vain and fruitless will all his Attempts prove against the true Servants of God, and faithful Soldiers of Christ; for *greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the World*; and if we *put on the whole Armour of God*, we shall be able not only to stand against the Wiles of the Devil, but to repel his most violent Assaults—yea, we shall be *more than Conquerors, through Him that loved us*.—After praying for Deliverance from Sin, and it's accursed Author, we conclude this Petition by desiring to be saved from the dreadful Consequences of it; “the Wrath of God, and everlasting Damnation:” in Comparison whereof all the Evils and Sufferings of this present Life are as nothing. Gracious and merciful as God is to repenting Sinners, yet to the obstinate and impenitent He is represented as a CON-
SUMING

SUMING FIRE: who shall drink of the *Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out, without Mixture, into the Cup of his Indignation; and shall be tormented with Fire and Brimstone, in the Presence of the holy Angels, and in the Presence of the Lamb: and the Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.* Rev. xiv. 10, 11.—From this **SECOND DEATH**, how earnestly ought we to pray, “ Good Lord, deliver us !”

Hitherto we have applied to the Throne of Grace for Deliverance from the Dominion, and Punishment, of Sin *in general*. We now proceed to specify the several Sorts of Sin; which (though all Sin properly proceeds from the *Heart*, as our Saviour teaches us) may yet, with respect to their Manner of operating, be divided into two Classes; those of the Spirit or Mind, and those of the Body: both equally dangerous, and fatal; and, if not repented of, *bringing forth Death*. And first, for spiritual Sins — “ from all Blindness of Heart.”—This indeed is rather a general bad Disposition and Depravity of the Mind, than any particular Species of Sin; and it is very properly set down in the first Place, on Account

count of it's being the Source and Fountain from whence the following Sins flow. *As the Light of the Body is the Eye*¹, so the divine Spirit is the *Light of the Soul*; and since Christ gives us that Spirit, He is therefore called *the TRUE LIGHT*², *which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World.* John i. 9. But if we will not be guided by that Light, if we will *quench the Spirit*, and put out this *Candle of the Lord*, how great must be

¹ The Word, which is rendered *Light*, in the Passage here referred to (Matt. vi. 22.) 'Ο ΑΥΓΝΟΣ, does not signify the *Light itself*, but what *receives* or *holds* the Light; as we sometimes use the Word *Lights* in common Discourse, to signify Candles, Torches, &c.—So that, properly speaking, the *material Light*, which the Eye receives, not the Eye itself, answers to the *divine Light*, which illuminates the Soul: and the Eye to the *human Spirit*, or Intellect; which, if it refuses to receive the Light of the *divine Spirit*, is as much darkened, or blinded, as the Eye is that shuts itself against the Light, or is so vitiated by corrupt Humours, as to be incapable of receiving it.

² THE LIGHT, ΤΟ ΦΩΣ, John i. 8. the *real, essential*, Light (what Plato calls, *αυτοφως*;) of which the material Light is the Emblem. Accordingly the Prophet, addressing himself to the Church, says; *Arise, shine* (or *be enlightened*) *for THY LIGHT is come, and the GLORY OF THE LORD is risen upon thee*—and *THE LORD shall be unto thee an EVERLASTING LIGHT, and THY GOD thy Glory.* Is. lx. 1 and 19. Which
last

be our *Darkness*! That "*Blindness of Heart*," which was at first *wilful*, will, if persisted in, become *judicial*; and God will give us over to a *reprobate Mind*, the just and proper Punishment of *loving Darkness rather than Light*. To prevent this, we must watch and pray against the first Beginnings of spiritual Darkness, against every Tendency and Disposition towards it; in like Manner as, to preserve our bodily Sight, we must guard against every Defect and Disorder in the Eye, when we first perceive it coming, lest by Neglect it bring on a total Blindness.

Now follows a black Catalogue of Sins, from which we pray to be delivered: and first, "from Pride"—a Sin peculiarly malignant, and diabolical. In the Language of Scripture, Pride does not usually signify what we mean by it in our common Discourse, an haughty insolent Carriage of our-

last Passage is thus beautifully paraphrased by our celebrated Poet;

———— "The LIGHT HIMSELF shall shine
Reveal'd, and GOD'S ETERNAL DAY be thine."—

Messiah, a sacred Eclogue; by Mr. Pope.
selves

selves to one another, but a proud Disposition of the Heart towards God ; and in this Sense, I think, we must here understand it ¹. The Descriptions we meet with of it in the Bible are very numerous ; and always represent it to us in the most odious and detestable Light. The Expression commonly used for it is that of *a lifting up*, or *exalting*

¹ Though this seems to be the leading and primary Sense of the Word *Pride*, and of other Words and Phrases used to describe it by, in the sacred Writings ; yet I am far from supposing that Pride, in the common Acceptation of the Word, is not there condemned, as a Sin of the greatest Malignity. In several Passages, both the one and the other Sort of Pride appear to be included. As where we read, that *the Lord hateth a proud Look*, or (as it is in the Margin) *haughty Eyes* ; and that *an high Look, and a proud Heart, is Sin* Prov. vi. 16, 17 ; and xxi. 4.—So also, in the Prophet's Description of the rebellious Jews ; *Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou*. Is. lxxv. 5. And in the Introduction to the Parable of the Pharisee and Publican ; which, we are told, our Lord *spake unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others*. Luke xviii. 9. In all Cases, the Disposition of our Hearts towards God will influence our Carriage towards our Neighbour : and *spiritual Pride* will never fail to produce a proud and contemptuous Treatment of one another. In short, *Pride*, in every Sense, *is hateful before God and Man*—*Pride is the Beginning of Sin ; and he that hath it shall pour out Abomination*. See Eccclus. x. 7, &c,

of

of the Heart against God. So Moses cautions the Israelites : *Lest when thou hast eaten, and art full, &c. — then thine HEART be LIFTED UP, and thou forget the LORD THY GOD.* Deut. viii. 12, 14. Thus we read, that *the Heart of Uzziab was LIFTED UP to his Destruction, for he transgressed against the Lord his God.* 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—and of Hezekiah, that *his Heart was LIFTED UP—* and that *he afterwards humbled himself for the PRIDE of his Heart.* Ib. xxxii. 25. 26. And, to mention but one Instance more, of Nebuchadnezzar, that great Example of spiritual Pride, whose History is so fully recorded by the Prophet Daniel, it is said, with a peculiar Emphasis, that *his Heart was LIFTED UP, and his Mind HARDENED IN PRIDE.* Dan. v. 20.—In the Book of Job, in the Psalms, in the Proverbs, and in the Writings of the Prophets, we find sundry Accounts of this same Sin, expressed in a Variety of Phrases, all tending to shew, that it has an immediate Reference to God ; that it is a Kind of Rebellion of the Heart against Him, a setting the Almighty at Defiance. It is *saying unto God, Depart from us ; for we*
desire

desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways. Job xxi. 14. It is being *wise in our own Eyes, and prudent in our own Sight.* Is. v. 21 — *refusing to give Glory to the Lord our God^m.* Jer. xiii. 16.—If we look into the New Testament, we shall see the same Sin described and condemned in the like Language. We have a striking Instance of it in the famous Parable of the Pharisee; who *trusted in himself that he was righteous*, and daringly boasted of his Righteousness to God. The Conclusion our blessed Lord draws from it well deserves our Attention: *Every one that EXALTETH himself shall be abased; and he that HUMBLETH himself shall be exalted.* Luke xviii. 14.—The Subduing of this spiritual Pride is elegantly described by St. Paul, by *casting down Imaginations* (or human Reasonings, which are ever apt to oppose the

^m In the Verse before, it is said, *be not PROUD.* And in the Verse following—*my Soul shall weep—for your PRIDE*: both plainly put in Opposition to the Words I have cited; *Give Glory to THE LORD YOUR GOD.* So that Pride here, as in numberless other Places, relates to the Disposition of the Heart towards God.

divine

divine Will) *and every HIGH THING that EXALTETH itself against the Knowledge of God; and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ.* 2 Cor. x. 5. And it is remarkable, that when St. James says, *God resisteth the PROUD, but giveth Grace unto the HUMBLE*, he immediately adds, by Way of Inference, *SUBMIT yourselves therefore to GOD.* Jam. iv. 6. 7, plainly shewing, that Pride, in the Scripture Sense, signifies *EXALTING ourselves* against Him. —Of this Sin the Deist and Infidel are most eminently guilty, who set up human Reason against divine Revelation, the *vain Deceits of Philosophy* against the unerring Word of God, the Sufficiency of their own Abilities against the Power of the Spirit, and the Value of their own Performances against the Merits of Christ. And more or less chargeable with the same Crime are all they, who in any Sense depart from the Truth and Simplicity of the Gospel; who *think of themselves more highly than they ought to think*; who are *puffed up* with their own Knowledge, and *wise in their own Conceits*; who claim

any Merit to themselves", and do not place their whole Trust and Confidence in the Mercy of God, and the *Redemption that is in Christ Jesus*. How earnestly ought we to pray against this fatal Snare of the Devil, lest, being *lifted up with Pride*, we *fall into his Condemnation*!—O blessed Saviour, who hast vouchsafed to set us a Pattern of Lowliness and Humility in thy own Example; inspire us, we beseech Thee, with the same heavenly Graces; and dispose us, by the Influence of thy Holy Spirit, to WALK HUMBLY WITH OUR GOD!

After "Pride" follows "Vain-Glory," it's usual Attendant. Now, by Vain-Glory, we may understand either Ostentation and boasting of ourselves, or an immoderate Desire and Fondness of the Praise of others: and in either Sense we shall find it strongly condemned in Scripture. If we take it in the former Sense, *boasting* is declared to be entirely opposite to the Spirit of Christianity.

" ——— " Sume superbiam
Quæsitam Meritis"—

may come well enough from an Heathen Poet; but is utterly incompatible with the pure System of Christian Ethics.

Where

Where is BOASTING? says St. Paul—*It is excluded—by the Law of Faith.* Rom. iii. 27—*For by Grace are ye saved, through Faith — Not of Works, lest any Man should BOAST.* Eph. ii. 8, 9.—And again: *He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.* 2 Cor. x. 17, 18. Nor does the Apostle by any Means contradict the Rule or Doctrine he here lays down, by any seeming Commendation of himself in the two following Chapters. Whoever reads them with Attention, and compares them carefully with his other Writings, will find that He was no less a Pattern, than a Preacher, of that true Christian Humility, which is the Reverse of Pride and Vain-Glory. The Case was this. There had crept into the Church of Corinth *false Apostles, deceitful Workers*, as he calls them, who had endeavoured to *corrupt* and seduce them *from the Simplicity that is in Christ*, and to *pervert the Gospel*, that He had preached to them. To counteract these evil Teachers, and prevent as much as possible the Spreading of their pernicious Doctrines amongst

his Corinthian Converts, it was necessary for our Apostle to vindicate himself from the Aspersions they had cast upon him, and to assert the Dignity and Authority of his Apostleship. But at the same Time, to shew with what Reluctance he enters upon this Self-Commendation, and how averse he is to any Thing that has even the Appearance of *boasting* or *glorying*, he makes an Apology to them for what he is going to say in his own Defence, intreating them to *bear with him a little* IN HIS FOLLY. Ch. xi. 1. In the same humble condescending Style, he tells them again, *I speak as it were* FOOLISHLY; and *I speak as* A FOOL. Ver. 17, 21, 23. Not that this Justification of himself was, strictly speaking, either foolish or criminal; but he expresses himself thus modestly, to shew that he had rather be *esteemed a Fool* among them in this Instance, than give the least Pretence for imputing to him Arrogance or Vain-boasting. — With the same prudent Caution he afterwards says, *It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory*. Ch. xii. 1 — and, *of myself I will not glory, but in my Infirmities*. Ver. 5. And though, as he immediately

ly adds, if he *should desire to glory*, he *should not be a Fool*, not properly chargeable with Folly ; yet he *forbears* enlarging, though ever so justly, in his own Defence, and directly turns his Discourse to a Subject of Humiliation and Self-abasement, magnifying the Grace and Power of his divine Master. And to sum up all in a few Words, he adds, in the true Spirit of Humility, and by Way of a gentle Rebuke to the Corinthians, *I am become a Fool in glorying, ye have compelled me : for I ought to have been commended of you : for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles, though I BE NOTHING.*

Ver. 11—that is ; *of myself, I am nothing*, have no Merit of my own ; but (as he elsewhere expresses himself) *BY THE GRACE OF GOD I am what I am—but I laboured more abundantly than they all : yet not I, but the GRACE OF GOD, which was with me.*

1 Cor. xv. 10. What an excellent Lesson do these Passages, and the whole Conduct of our Apostle, on all Occasions, afford to every Disciple of Christ, and particularly to every Minister of the Gospel !——But there is another Species of Boasting censured in

Scripture, which may be included under the Notion of Vain-Glory. This is what the wise Man cautions us against, when he says, *BOAST not thyself of To-morrow; for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.* Prov. xxvii. 1 — and what St. James condemns, when, after speaking of the Shortness and Uncertainty of human Life, he adds; *But now ye rejoice in your BOASTINGS: all such rejoicing (or vain-glorying, as it might as well have been rendered) is evil.* Jam. iv. 16. — Let us now consider Vain-Glory in the other Sense I mentioned, as signifying an immoderate Desire and Fondness of the Praise of others: and so the Word seems to be used by St. Paul, where he says, *Let us not be desirous of Vain-Glory.* Gal. v. 26. the literal Rendering is, *Let us not be vain-glorious.* So again, *Let nothing be done through Strife, or Vain-Glory.* Phil. ii. 3. The Expression is the same in the Original with that in the other Text, and is generally understood to signify, Ambition, or a Desire of Applause. Under proper Restrictions, indeed, a Desire of Praise (that is, of the Approbation of worthy
and

and good Men) is by no Means blameable: but it is very apt to be carried to Excess; and it then becomes in the highest Degree criminal, when we *love the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God* — when we *receive Honour one of another, and seek not the Honour that cometh from God only*. See John v. 44. and xii. 43. In whichever Sense therefore we take the Word “Vain-Glory,” in our Litany, we have great Reason to pray against it, and to use all our Care and Diligence to keep our Minds free from so sinful and abominable a Disposition.

The next Sin, we pray to be delivered from, is “Hypocrisy,” a Sin of so deep a Dye, that Words are wanting to paint it in it's proper Colours: It signifies, according to the primary and original Sense of the Word, a *personating* or putting on a false Character; and in the Scripture Language it usually denotes the putting on an outward Shew and Appearance of Sanctity and Religion, when the Heart is full of Wickedness and Impiety. It carries with it the Idea, not only of Self-Deceit, and of imposing upon the World, but also of a profane Design of mocking God, a

Sort of daring Affront to his Omniscience: as if He, who *formed the Heart* as well as the *Eye*, should not see into it's inmost Recesses; as if He, who *knoweth the Thoughts of Man*, should not *punish*. Well therefore does Job cry out, *He also shall be my SALVATION: for an HYPOCRITE shall not come before Him.* Job. xiii. 16 — that is, in the Language of the New Testament, shall be *destroyed with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord.* And again, *What is the Hope of the HYPOCRITE, though he hath gained, (gained his Ends, perhaps, in this World) when God taketh away his Soul?* xxvii. 8.—But nothing can give us so just and clear a Notion of the Nature of this heinous Sin, as the Account we have of the Scribes and Pharisees; whose Hypocrisy is fully set forth in a Variety of the most striking Instances. Our blessed Saviour, who in his Words, as well as in his Disposition, was all Meekness and Gentleness; and who reprov'd other Sinners with the greatest Tenderness and Compassion; always uses Expressions of the utmost Sharpness and Indignation to the pharisaical Hypocrites, and denounces Wo
against

against them in Terms of unusual Severity. *Ye Serpents, ye Generation of Vipers, how can ye Escape the Damnation of Hell?* Matt. xxiii. 33 : in which Chapter, as well as in other Parts of the Gospels, we meet with a most lively Description of that *Leaven of the Pharisees* ; that HYPOCRISY, against which our Lord so earnestly cautions his Disciples ; Luke xii. 1. In this, as in all other Sins, there are various Degrees ; the highest of which bespeak a Depravity of Mind wholly incurable ; and the lowest are of so malignant a Nature, and so evil a Tendency, that we cannot too earnestly pray, or too carefully guard our Hearts, against them.

From the Sins, which are in a peculiar Manner Offences against God, we pass on to those which more directly respect our Neighbour ; such as “ Envy, Hatred, and Malice, and all Uncharitableness : ” though indeed these, no less than the other, are, in Strictness of Speech, Sins against God. For the same Authority that enjoins *Love* and Obedience to OUR MAKER, requires us also to *love our Neighbour as Ourselves* ; and if we *sin against the Brethren*, St. Paul tells us,

we sin against CHRIST. 1 Cor. viii. 12. Now, when we pray to be delivered from these Sins, it is not from the ill Effects of them from others (as David sometimes petitions to be delivered from the Malice of his Enemies) but from the Prevalency of them in our own Breasts: it is the same in Effect, as if we prayed God to “pour into our Hearts that most excellent Gift of Charity,” or universal Love, “the very Bond of Peace, and of all Virtues;” to which all these Sins are directly opposite.—For first, *Charity envieth not*—(See 1 Cor. xiii. 4, &c.) instead of repining, *rejoiceth*, at the Happiness and Success of others; and is grieved at their *Iniquity* and Misfortunes. The vile Nature, and sad Effects, of Envy are often pointed out to us in the sacred Writings. From it’s preying on a Man’s own self, it is emphatically called *the Rotteness of the Bones*: and with respect to it’s Consequences to others, the wise Man says, *Wrath is cruel, and Anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before Envy?* Prov. xxvii. 4. From this cursed Root springs *Confusion, and every evil Work*. Jam. iii. 16. It was this, that prompted the Devil to seduce our
first

first Parents; and made Cain slay his Brother. With great Reason therefore does St. Paul place *Envyings*, as well as *Murders*, in that List of Sins, or *Works of the Flesh*, which he tells us shall exclude all that are guilty of them from the *Kingdom of God*. Gal. v. 21. — In the same Catalogue we find “*Hatred*,” which in the Litany follows “*Envy*,” as being it’s inseparable Companion. And this Sin, if we believe our Bible, is no less contrary to the Love of God, than to the Love of our Neighbour. For *Love is of God—and he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love*. 1 John iv. 7, 8. And again; *If a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar*. Ver. 20. And once more; *Whosoever hateth his Brother, is a MURDERER; and ye know, that no Murderer hath eternal Life abiding in him*. Ch. iii. 15. — After “*Hatred*” comes “*Malice*,” by which we may understand a settled, confirmed, inveterate Hatred, or Spite; as distinguished from the sudden Effusions of Anger or Passion. It is the Disposition of such Men as are said to *devise Iniquity, and work Evil upon their Beds; who sleep not,*
except

except they have done Mischief. Mic. ii. 1. and Prov. iv. 16. And it is expressly condemned by the Apostle in several Places, where he ranks it with other Sins of the deepest Dye; such as *Wrath, Blasphemy, Envy*, and the like. Col. iii. 8, &c.—

The last Sin, we pray against in this Petition, is “Uncharitableness;” which is of as comprehensive a Nature as it’s opposite Virtue, Charity. For it includes, not only all the grosser and more enormous Sins afore-mentioned, “*Envy, Hatred, and Malice;*” but every lesser Violation of that Love, which is *the fulfilling of the Law*. The common Notions of Charity and Uncharitableness are very confined and erroneous: the former being usually limited to Almsgiving, and a kind favourable Way of thinking of our Neighbours; the latter to a Want of Liberality, and Censoriousness. But our Bible will inform us better. We shall there find CHARITY or LOVE (for it is the same Word in the Original) stand for *the whole* of our Duty towards one another: consequently, whatever is contrary thereto may properly

properly be called *Uncharitableness*. — And first, *Love must be without Dissimulation — not in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth*. Therefore all Insincerity, and Hypocrisy* are here strongly condemned. We must also *love one another FERVENTLY; and above all Things have FERVENT CHARITY among ourselves*. Whence it follows, that even Coldness and Indifference are *uncharitable*. — St. Paul exhorts the Philippians, in the most earnest and affectionate Terms that can be conceived, to be *like-minded, having the same LOVE, being of one Accord, of one Mind*. Phil. ii. 1, 2 : and to the same Purpose we meet with many Admonitions in his other Epistles, which

* It would be endless to enumerate the various Sorts and Instances of this Kind of Hypocrisy, which abound in the World. *An Hypocrite with his Mouth DESTROYETH his Neighbour*, says Solomon. Prov. xi. 9. The Truth of which Remark every Man's Experience and Observation must daily confirm. Fair Speeches, insincere Professions of Friendship, and unmeaning Promises, do infinitely more Mischief than open Enmity. Well therefore did David pray : *Deliver my Soul, O Lord, from LYING LIPS, and from a DECEITFUL TONGUE*. Ps. cxx. 2. Such as he elsewhere describes — *with FLATTERING LIPS, and with a DOUBLE HEART do they speak*. Ps. xii. 2.

shew,

shew, that all Schisms and Divisions in the Christian Church are highly *uncharitable*.—Revenge is another flagrant Transgression of the Law of Charity; and has this great Aggravation attending it, that it is an Invasion of the Prerogative of God: *for it is written, VENGEANCE is MINE; I will repay, saith the Lord.* Rom. xii. 19.—In short, all Unkindness, whether in Thought, Word, or Deed; quick Resentment, and lasting Anger; harsh Judgment, and *evil Surmisings*; Pride, and Arrogance; contemptuous and reproachful Language; Calumny, and Detraction; taking Delight in discovering, and publishing, the Faults and Failings of others; Impatience, when we are justly provoked; Selfishness, and Want of Compassion; denying Relief to the Poor and Distressed; may all be included in the Notion of Uncharitableness^p: which, if we are

^p St. Paul, in his most beautiful and accurate Description of Charity, or Love, 1 Cor. xiii, seems to have had principally in View those lesser Instances of Uncharitableness, which so many (otherwise) good Sort of Men run into, without considering them, perhaps, as any Failings at all. Injustice, Ex-
tortion,

are sincere in our Profession as Christians, we must in every Instance studiously and carefully avoid ;—cultivating and practising the contrary Virtues of Humanity and Benevolence, in their utmost Latitude and Extent; and, in one Word, **LOVING AS BRETHREN.**

We now proceed to pray against “ For-
nication, and all other *deadly Sin.*”—The
Church of Rome, from a wrong Interpreta-
tion of a Passage in the 1st Epistle of St.
John, Ch. v. 16, 17th, has advanced a very false
and

tortion, downright Fraud, and the like, will startle them,
and excite their Horror and Aversion; while those smaller
Offences against the Law of Charity will pass unobserved, or
uncensured. But we should remember that the Sins, which
most easily beset us, are the most dangerous, if not the most
heinous; and that it requires double Care and Watchfulness
to be upon our Guard against them. Besides, *lesser Sins* never
fail to lead us (though often by imperceptible Degrees) to the
Commission of *greater*.

“ *There is a Sin UNTO DEATH*, says the Apostle: a Sin,
which, like a mortal Disease of the Body, is absolutely incur-
able, and therefore unpardonable. This is that Sin against
the Holy Ghost; which implies a settled, confirmed, Malice,
and final Impenitence. From comparing Matt. xii. 24, 31,
with Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6, we may define it to be, “ a wilful and
malicious Rejection of the Christian Faith,” or “ an Apostacy
from it, when once professed;” both which proceed from the
same Principle, and terminate in the same Sin. The Blas-
phemy

and dangerous Notion, of some Sins being *deadly* or *damnable*, and others *venial* or *pardonable*. Whereas the Doctrine of Scripture is plain and clear, that the *Wages* of all *Sin is Death*; and that whoever persists in any *one Sin*, unrepented of, shall be deemed a Transgressor of the *Law*, and suffer accordingly: his Guilt is of the same *Kind*, though not of the same *Degree*, as if he were an Offender in more Instances; and his Punishment, though less severe, shall be no less certain, and eternal.—However, it is true, that some Sins are in their Nature and Circumstances more *heinous* than others; and in this Number we may justly reckon Fornication: which in Scripture is always placed in the same Class with the most atrocious and enormous Crimes. See Rom. i. 29.—1 Cor. vi. 9.—Gal. 5. 19.—1 Tim. i. 9, 10.—Rev. ix. 21; xxi. 8; and xxii.

phemy of the Pharisees is an Instance of the one; and the Conduct of the Traitor Judas of the other.—Again: *There is a Sin NOT UNTO DEATH*. 1 John v. 17. *All Unrighteousness is Sin*, and, if *persisted in*, will infallibly end in Death: but where there is Room for Repentance, the Sinner *may return and live*.

15. And, however Men may deceive and flatter themselves, or whatever Excuses corrupt Nature may suggest in Extenuation of their Guilt, the Word of God is clear and express, that *Fornicators shall not inherit the Kingdom of God; but shall have their Part, with Murderers, Idolaters, and the like abominable Sinners, in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone: which is the SECOND DEATH.* Rev. xxi. 8.— So utterly inconsistent are all Sins of Uncleanness with the Purity of our Religion, that the Apostle says, they ought not to be so much as *once named* among Christians. Eph. v. 3—much less excused, or practised.— FLEE FORNICATION, is a direct and positive Precept, that will admit of no Evasion. Other Sins are *without the Body*; but this is a Sin *against our Bodies*: it is *making the Members of Christ the Members of an Harlot*; and *defiling the Temple of God*, which if any Man do, *him shall God destroy.* 1 Cor. iii. 17, and vi. 18.

After having prayed against Sin in general, and the most heinous Sins in particular, we are taught in the next Place to implore the
divine

divine Grace and Protection to defend us against the several Temptations that lead to them ; which are very properly comprised under three Heads, “ the Deceits of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil.” For these are constantly represented as the three grand Enemies of our Salvation, from the Allurements and Suggestions of which all our Sins may easily be traced ; and as these *war against our Souls*, so we must *fight manfully against them*, under the Banner of Christ, through the whole Course of our Lives, if we hope to be saved. This is a principal Part of the Vow made for us at our Baptism, and which we ourselves have since solemnly engaged to perform ^r. It may be of Use to

Every Person at his Confirmation does, in the most solemn and deliberate Manner, ratify the Vow of Obedience made for him at his Baptism. The same he does also, in Effect, when he receives the holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper ; dedicating “ himself, his Soul, and Body,” to the Service of God. And though a Man should neglect to be confirmed, or refuse to communicate, let him not vainly imagine he can thereby evade his Obligation to perform his baptismal Vow. or escape the Penalty of the Breach of it : for the *Matter* of it is equally binding, whether he ratifies it or not ; and the Neglect of such a Ratification, added to a profane Contempt of the divine Ordinances, will by no Means mitigate, but greatly increase, his Guilt and Condemnation.

consider

consider the Danger we are in, and the Deceits we are exposed to, from each of these spiritual Enemies, distinctly.—Now the World, and all the Things of the World, as God created them, were doubtless *very good*. Gen. i. 31 : but are become depraved and corrupt through the Wickedness of Man ; whom HE also *made upright*, though *they have sought out many evil Inventions*. Eccclus. vii. 29. When therefore we are told, that *the Friendship of the World is Enmity with God*, Jam. iv. 4 ; and are forbidden to *love the World*, because *the Love of it* is inconsistent with *the Love of the Father*, 1 John ii. 15 ; we are to understand by it, that all such Attachment to, or Pursuit of, the Things of this World, as takes us off from our Attention to the next, and much more all sinful Compliances with the evil Customs, or wicked Men of the World, are expressly prohibited, as absolutely incompatible with the Love of God, and the Care of our Souls. Are we then to leave the World intirely, to shut ourselves up, and have no Intercourse with it ? By no Means. This would be, to desert the Station in which God has placed

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us, to decline the Combat He has appointed us, and to *hide our Talent in a Napkin*. Our blessed Lord, in his last affectionate and earnest Supplication for his Disciples, prays his Father, not that He would *take them out of the World*, but that He would *keep them from the Evil*. John xvii. 15; that is, from the EVIL ONE, or the Devil, who is emphatically styled, THE GOD OF THIS WORLD. 2 Cor. iv. 4.—Hence we should learn, not to *for-sake* the World, but to *keep* ourselves *un-spotted* from it; not to reject the *good* Things of this Life, but to renounce the *evil*; in a Word, to *use this World, as not abusing it*.—But to be more particular. Let us take a View of the several Temptations, which may properly be called “the Deceits of the World,” as distinguished from those of the Flesh and the Devil; and of the Sins into which they respectively betray us. And here we may give the first Place to *the Deceitfulness of Riches*; which our Saviour, in his Parable of the Sower, joins with *the Care of this World*; telling us, that they will *choke the Word* of God, and make it *become un-fruitful*. Matt. xiii. 22. For the great Danger of an immoderate Love, and eager Pursuit

suit of Riches, does not arise from the Tendency they have to lead us into those flagrant Sins of Injustice, Fraud, Extortion, and Oppression (though these indeed they sometimes produce) but from the more general and almost constant Effect of them, which is to alienate our Minds from the *one Thing needful*, to make us forgetful of God, and regardless of the grand Duties of Religion. On this Account it was, that He, who *knew what was in Man*, who was perfectly acquainted with every Motion of the human Heart, declared in such strong Terms, that *a rich Man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: nay, that *it is easier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God*. Matt. xix. 23, 24. Not that we are to imagine that the bare Possession of Wealth, or the acquiring of it by honest Industry, is here condemned as unlawful; but it is the *Trusting in Riches* (as it is explained in the parallel Place, Mark x. 24) the Devoting of our Hearts to them, the *Service of Mammon*, against which we are cautioned, as being inconsistent with the *Service of God*. In like Manner St. Paul, in his

Charge to Timothy, declares, that *they that will be rich fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which drown Men in Destruction and Perdition. For the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil : which while some coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many Sorrows.* 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.—But there are other Idols, that the World holds out to us, such as Power, Honour, Fame, and Applause, which are too apt to engross our Affections, and to estrange us from the Love of God. It is true that these, as well as Riches, may be lawfully pursued, innocently enjoyed, and applied to very useful and good Purposes. But their natural Tendency, and usual Effect, are otherwise. We too commonly use indirect Means, base Arts, Flattery, and sinful Compliances, to obtain them; and when obtained, they often make us arbitrary, imperious, haughty, insolent, and vain.—Another Temptation we are subject to from the World, is Pleasure: by which I do not mean the grosser Sins of Sensuality (for these belong more peculiarly to the Deceits of the Flesh) but the
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Pomps and Vanities, the Gaieties and Diversions, of Life : which are very apt to captivate our Hearts, and take us off from our Duty, both to God and Man. Not that we are required to be always employed in Acts of Religion, or Application to Business. No : The Mind must be sometimes unbent, and the Body relieved, or we shall be unfit for both. All innocent Amusements are certainly allowable. Only, we must be very careful not to let them employ too much of our Time and Attention, or divert us from the main Business of our Lives ; lest we become *Lovers of Pleasures more than Lovers of God*, and by that Means fail of obtaining those only true and lasting *Pleasures*, which are *at his Right Hand for evermore*—But besides the *Things* of the World, we must beware also of the *Men* of the World ; for they too may ensnare, and lead us into Sin. *Be not deceived*, says the Apostle ; *evil Communications corrupt good Manners.* 1 Cor. xv. 33. And too truly may we apply to wicked Men in every Age what the Prophet said of the Jews of old ; that *they lay wait as he that setteth Snares, they set a Trap, they catch*

Men. As a Cage is full of Birds, so are their Houses full of DECEIT. Jer. v. 26, 27. With such as these we must *have no Fellowship*, no Intimacy of any Kind; no Intercourse, nor Conversation, unless where there is a fair Prospect of *reproving* and reclaiming them.— But there are others of a less bad Stamp, whose Examples may deceive and mislead us. To imitate any Character too closely, is dangerous: and while we admire and follow Men for their good Qualities, we should be always upon our Guard, lest we copy them also in their bad ones. All Persons have their Failings: and what is only a Foible in the Original may in the Copyer become a Sin. For Instance, what in a very rich Man is only an indiscreet Expensiveness, may in one less affluent be a criminal Extravagance: and so on the other hand, what is an Excess of Frugality in a low Station, may be down-

* In Matters of Business, indeed, this is sometimes unavoidable. And yet, it might be in a great Measure prevented, would we deal only with Men of Probity and Virtue; or at least always give them the Preference, though we might subject ourselves to some little Inconveniencies by so doing. To encourage and favour bad Men, is in some Sort to partake of their Guilt.

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right Covetousness in an high one. In short, the utmost Caution and Prudence are necessary to secure us against the various Deceits of the World, with respect to our eternal, as well as our temporal, Interest. But it does not follow from hence, as I before observed, that we are to shut ourselves up in Solitude. Man was formed for Society; and many of the Duties, as well as the Enjoyments, of Life depend on it. There are Times, no Doubt, when we should *commune with our own Hearts in our Chambers, and be still*. But in general, an unsocial Life is both unnatural, and unchristian; contrary to the divine Example of Him, who WENT ABOUT *doing Good*, who conversed freely and familiarly with Mankind, who honoured a Marriage-Feast with his Presence, and wrought his first Miracle at it, thereby shewing his Approbation of the friendly Meeting, and social Banquet'.—Nor is a Compliance with the

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Customs

* John the Baptist, we read, *came neither eating nor drinking*, Matt. xi. 18.—that is, he came solitary in the Wilderness, with great Austerity and Severity of Life, with strict Fasting and Self-denial, in a Manner suitable to the peculiar Office he bore.

Customs and Fashions of the World, so far as they are innocent, by any Means forbidden us. An affected Singularity in Matters of Indifference is foolish and ridiculous. But wherever Virtue, or Religion, is any Way concerned, we cannot be too careful, *not to follow a Multitude to do Evil*; not only to *abstain* from what is really immoral and wicked, but from the very *Appearance* of it.

“The Deceits of the Flesh” come next to be considered: by which we are to understand the several Appetites and Passions of our Nature. These, though not sinful in themselves, become the Occasions of Sin, when they exceed their proper Limits, or are directed to improper Objects. Hunger and Thirst are implanted in us for wise Purposes; but, when gratified to Excess, lead us into

bore. But our blessed Lord, *the Son of Man* (whom *we* are to imitate) *came eating and drinking*; always no Doubt with perfect Temperance and Moderation, but in a more free Way of Conversation; different from that of John, and intirely opposite to the recluse, austere, Life of Monks and Hermits, those useless Members of Society; and of all those, who spend their Days in an inactive Solitude, or who debar themselves from the innocent Enjoyments of this World, injuring their Healths, and depressing their Spirits, by ill-judged Acts of Mortification.

Gluttony

Gluttony and Drunkenness, Sins of the vilest Sort, which debase us below the Beasts that perish. So likewise the Desire of the Sexes, though not criminal, when kept within the Bounds of Religion (*for Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefiled*) becomes highly so, when it transgresses them; and drives us into all Manner of Impurity and Licentiousness. — It is the same with the Passions of the Mind, as with the Appetites of the Body. To instance only in Anger. It is certain, that we may *be angry, and sin not*. Our Saviour himself, we read, was moved with *Anger* on a certain Occasion (Mark iii. 5.); and the Malice and Hypocrisy of the Pharisees often raised his just Indignation. But in us frail Mortals this Passion is very seldom rightly directed, or kept within due Restraint; but generally hurries us into the grossest Transgressions of our Duty, and produces a Sort of temporary Madness. Now in all these Cases, the Fallacy lies here; that we do not distinguish between human Nature in it's original Constitution, and in it's present degenerate and corrupt State. Had Man preserved his Innocence, he might have safely followed

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ed the Dictates of his Nature ; whereas to *fallen* Man it is a dangerous and deceitful Guide, and, if not carefully checked and over-ruled by Religion, will fatally mislead him. We are therefore, with great Reason, required to *mortify our Members which are upon the Earth*, and to *crucify the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts*^u ; that is, to bring them into strict Subjection to the *Law of Christ*, and the Commands of God ; that so we may not be ensnared by the *Deceitfulness* of these Incentives to Sin ; that we may not be *drawn away of OUR OWN LUST, and enticed*. Jam. i. 14.

But we must remember that *we wrestle not only against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darknes of this World, against*

^u The Manner, in which St. Paul expresses himself in the Passage here referred to, is very remarkable : *They that are Christ's*, says he, *HAVE CRUCIFIED the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts*. Gal. v. 24. He speaks of it, as of something already done ; something so essential to the Religion of Christ, that no Man can be a Christian without it. To the same Purpose he writes in another Epistle : *Knowing this, that our old Man IS CRUCIFIED with Him*. And again : *Likewise reckon ye also yourselves TO BE DEAD indeed unto Sin*. Rom. vi. 6—11 : to be already dead to it.

Spiritual

spiritual Wickedness in high Places. Eph. vi. 12. All these Phrases are here used, to point out the Power and Malice of evil Spirits, with whom we are to contend. And as they are united under one Head, who is called *Satan, or the Devil, the Prince of this World, the Prince of the Power of the Air, that old Serpent, which deceiveth the whole World*; we are taught to pray against his “Deceits,” whereby he is continually endeavouring to seduce us from our Allegiance to God, and to effect our Destruction. Now the “Deceits of the Devil,” (as distinguished from those of the World, and the Flesh; which he also makes Use of against us) are those evil Thoughts and Suggestions which he infuses into our Minds, whether they relate to Matters of Faith, or Practice, or both. Thus did he deceive our first Parent; seducing her first into Infidelity, and then into Disobedience. The divine Command was plain and absolute; *Thou shalt not eat of it; for in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* Gen. ii. 17. But Satan denied this: *Ye shall not surely die,* iii. 4; artfully insinuating, that this forbidden Fruit
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would *open their Eyes*, and make them as *Gods, knowing Good from Evil*. Ver. 5. In like Manner does he commonly deal with us; first shaking our Faith, and then, by an easy Consequence, drawing us into actual Transgression. With a View to the Tempter's Arts in the former Respect, St. Paul expresses his Fears to his Corinthian Converts, *lest by any Means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his Subtilty, so their Minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in Christ*. 2 Cor. xi. 3. And the same Caution is equally necessary in every Age of the Church, and never perhaps more so than at present, when those Emissaries of Satan, the Patrons of Heresy and Infidelity, are so industrious and zealous to propagate their false Doctrines, and seduce us from the true Faith of the Gospel. This is the grand Object, the first and principal Stratagem, of the Enemy of our Souls.—But where he cannot succeed so far as to draw us into absolute Infidelity, he has Recourse to other Delusions, and attempts to undermine our Virtue, and so to bring us to Ruin. To this End he is apt to deceive us with false No-
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tions of the Nature of Sin; representing many Things as pardonable Failings, and Sins of Weakness or Ignorance, which are in Truth wilful and deliberate Acts of Disobedience — Trusting to a Death-bed Repentance is another fatal Snare of the Devil, whereby many Souls have been destroyed — Sundry Doctrines and Practices of the Romish Church are plainly to be resolved into the *Working* of the same evil Spirit, the same *Deceivableness of Unrighteousness*. — In short, whatsoever is contrary to the Truth and Simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, or subversive of Holiness and Virtue, however specious the Pretence or Disguise may be under which it comes recommended, is strictly and properly speaking, DEVILISH; the Work and Contrivance of the great DECEIVER, who can *transform himself into an Angel of Light*, and whose *Ministers also are transformed, as the Ministers of Righteousness*, the more easily to accomplish their wicked Designs. — Against these Deceits we must watch, and pray, constantly keeping ourselves *stedfast in the Faith*, and uniform in our Obedience to the plain, revealed Will of God. And

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on the one Hand we should not be dejected or disheartened in our spiritual Warfare, whatever Difficulties or Temptations we may sometimes meet with ; so on the other, we ought not to be too presuming or elated, knowing what a powerful Enemy we have to contend with, and that we shall never be wholly free from Danger, 'till we have finished our Course in this Life, and are arrived at *the Haven where we would be*. Neither does it become us, to think or speak slightly of our spiritual Adversary, who is permitted by the all-wise God to tempt and assault us. To *make a Mock at Sin*, is a Mark of the greatest Folly ; and to talk in a ludicrous jesting Manner of the *Author* of it, is no less weak and absurd. The Salvation of our Souls is an Affair of the most serious Concern to us ; and where that is endangered, no light Discourse, or Jokes of any Sort, should be admitted.

From Sin and spiritual Evils, we now turn our Thoughts to temporal and worldly Calamities. And first, we pray unto Him, whom *the Winds and Seas obey*, and who has all Nature at his Command, that he will deliver

liver us “from Lightning and Tempest;” and from those still more terrible Instruments of the divine Vengeance, “Plague, Pestilence, and Famine;” which our Sins and Provocations have but too justly deserved — And since the same Almighty Being can punish us by *the Sword* from *without*, as well as by *the Pestilence and Famine within*; we beseech Him also to save us “from Battle, and Murder.” These indeed may be taken separately, as signifying open War, and secret Assassination. But if we connect them together, we shall see good Reason to join *Murder* with Battle, or War; Death and Destruction being it’s certain Consequences. And although a War undertaken in Self-Defence is undoubtedly justifiable, nor is the injured Party in this Case answerable for the Slaughter that ensues; yet whoever enters into it from Motives of Ambition, Policy, or false Honour, is certainly chargeable with all the Blood that is shed on both Sides, and is in the highest and worst Sense guilty of MURDER; of the Murder of Thousands, and Ten Thousands. Nor are those Persons wholly free from this Guilt, who by disturb-
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ing our Peace at Home, and opposing Government right or wrong, give Occasion to our foreign Enemies to attack us. A Nation *divided against itself cannot long stand*; and much surely will they have to answer for, who cause those Divisions, and thereby promote and hasten it's Destruction. Would to God this were seriously considered, by our modern PATRIOTS, falsely so called!—The last Evil we deprecate in this Sentence is, “Sudden Death.” But some Persons will not allow this to be any Evil at all; rather considering it as an Act of God's Mercy and Kindness, to remove us at once from the Miseries of Life, and prevent the Pains of a long Sickness, which is so often the Forerunner of Death. Undoubtedly we ought to offer up this, and all our Petitions, with the utmost Deference and Submission to the Will of the Almighty, who best knows what is fitting for us. I will grant too, that in some Cases sudden Death may be intended as a Blessing; since many faithful and pious Christians have been so taken out of this World. But that in general we have Reason to look upon it in a different Light, cannot, I think, be denied.

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The Consequences of it, so far as our temporal Concerns are affected, are often very bad ; and with respect to our spiritual ones, I fear, still worse. How few, alas ! live as if they ever thought of dying ! or rather, as if they seriously believed that Death would consign them to an unchangeable and eternal State of Happiness or Misery ! And who would wish to be called out of Life thus unprepared ? Who would not rather endure the bitterest Pains of a long Illness, if by that Means God would graciously awaken him to Repentance, than be given over to *the Worm that never dieth, and the Fire that is never quenched* ? Not that an habitual, hardened, Sinner has any Reason to hope that, after a Life spent in open Rebellion against God, a few Tears and Groans, or even real Sorrow and Remorse at the last, will be at all available to his Pardon and Salvation. But all, even the best of Men, being too apt to be forgetful and negligent of the *one Thing needful* in the Days of their Health and Strength, may very properly wish and pray to have some Time allowed them, to provide for their great Change, and to *pre-*

pare to meet their God. Yet, since “in the Midst of Life we are in Death,” and we cannot tell how soon, or how suddenly, our *Souls* may be *required* of us; it is certainly the most egregious Folly and Madness, to defer that to the last, which ought to be the constant Business of our Lives; namely, the great Work of Repentance, and the Exercise of real Virtue and *Holiness*, *without which no Man shall see the Lord.*

In the last Paragraph we prayed chiefly against those Evils and Calamities, which come more immediately as Punishments from the Hand of God. We now pray against such as proceed directly from wicked Men; and these are divided into two Classes, the one tending to the Ruin of the State, the other to the Destruction of the Church. Of the former Sort are, “all Sedition, privy Conspiracy, and Rebellion.” Sedition is properly placed first, as being the Mother of the other two; the accursed Root, from whence spring Rage and Fury, Rapine and Plunder, Murder and Desolation. *Behold*, says St. James, *how great a Matter a little Fire kindleth!* When Men of factious and turbulent Spirits,
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under a specious Shew of Patriotism and the Love of Liberty, raise Jealousies in the Minds of the deluded People, and alienate their Affections from their lawful Governors; when, instead of *studying to be quiet, and to do their own Business*, every Man sets up for a Politician, invading the Province of his Superiors, and censuring Measures which he cannot be a Judge of, and which no way belong to him to determine on; when Murmurs and Complaints are every where encouraged, and *insolent Remonstrances* carried to the Throne itself; when Subjects dictate to their Prince, and put the Legislature at Defiance; what dreadful Consequences may we not expect to ensue from such a Scene of Disorder and Confusion? May we not justly fear, that *the Lord will visit for these Things*; that his *Soul will be avenged on such a Nation as this*? that He will *give them up, unto their own Hearts Lusts*; and let them *follow their own Imaginations*; 'till they fall a Prey to domestic Tyrants, or are enslaved under a foreign Yoke?— May it please Thee, O merciful God, who alone canst order the unruly Wills and Affections of sin-

ful Men, to avert these Judgments from the People of this Land! Turn our Hearts, we beseech Thee, from Faction and Sedition, to a Spirit of Loyalty and Obedience; and give us Grace to be truly sensible of, and thankful for, the great Blessings we enjoy under our present Establishment! And may the following Instructions of thy Holy Spirit sink deep into our Breasts, and influence our Conduct! — *My Son, fear thou the Lord, and the King: and meddle not with them, that are given to change.* Prov. xxiv. 21. *Curse not the King, no not in thy Thought.* Eccclus. x. 20. — *neither speak evil of the Ruler of thy People.* Acts xxiii. 5. — *Let every Soul be subject unto the higher Powers. For there is no Power, but of God: the Powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation.* Rom. xiii. 12. — *Now the Works of the Flesh are manifest, which are these — SEDITIONS, &c. — they which do such Things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* Gal. v. 19, &c. — *Follow Peace with all Men.* Heb. xii. 14. — FEAR

GOD. HONOUR THE KING. 1 Pet. ii. 17.

—These are plain Texts, that need no Comment: and as they sufficiently shew the exceeding Heinousness of “Privy Conspiracy and Rebellion,” I think it unnecessary to add any Remarks on the Nature of those Sins, which every Person, who has any Sense of Duty, any Feelings of Humanity, must look upon with Horror and Detestation.

The three following Articles relate more directly to the Church; which we pray may be delivered “from all false Doctrine, Heresy, and Schism.” Now since the Word of God, as delivered in the holy Scriptures, is the only Standard of Truth, whatsoever is contrary thereto, whether it relate to Matters of Faith or Practice, comes properly under the Denomination of *false Doctrine*. In this extensive Signification the Apostle always uses the Word. When he bids Timothy *charge some that they teach no other Doctrine*; that is, no other than what he himself had taught, and which he had received by an immediate Revelation from Christ; it is plain from what follows, that he does not confine his Notion of *false Doctrine* to Mat-

ters of Opinion and Speculation, but lays the chief Stress on what may affect the great Duties of Christian Morality. After reckoning up some of the most enormous and detestable Sins, such as Murder, Perjury, and the like; he adds, *And if there be any other Thing that is CONTRARY TO SOUND DOCTRINE.* 1 Tim. i. 10. — Again, when he foretells a Departure *from the Faith in the latter Times*, Ch. iv. 1; he brings Instances of the false Doctrines of those *seducing Spirits*, which directly relate to Matters of *Practice*. — The same Observation will hold good on his Censure of false Teachers, Ch. vi. 3; *who consent not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the DOCTRINE which is according to GODLINESS.* — So, when he charges Timothy to *hold fast the Form of sound Words*, which he had heard of him, he adds by Way of Explanation, *in Faith and LOVE, which is in Christ Jesus.* 2 Tim. i. 13: shewing, that *sound Doctrine* had Respect to LOVE, *which is the fulfilling of the Law*, as well as to FAITH, which is the *Foundation* of it. — And the same appears no less clearly from his Instructions

structions to Titus : (See Ch. i. ver. 9, and ii. 1—to the End of the Epistle)—The Church of Rome is a standing Monument of *false Doctrine*, in this scriptural Sense of the Word, and may therefore with the strictest Propriety be called ANTICHRIST ; inasmuch as she opposes and contradicts the express Doctrines of our Saviour and his Apostles, corrupting both the Faith and Morals of her Members. And among Protestants of every Denomination there are too many *false Teachers* ; who, sometimes perhaps through Ignorance, but more often from a Pride of Science, and Love of Singularity, or *for filthy Lucre's Sake* ^w, propagate Doctrines contrary to the Truth, and

^w This is what St. Paul affirms to be the leading Motive of those false Teachers in his Days, whom he calls *unruly and vain Talkers and Deceivers* (or *Deceivers of Souls*, as the Greek Word signifies) *whose Mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole Houses, teaching Things which they ought not, FOR FILTHY LUCRE'S SAKE.* Tit. i. 10, 11—And St. Peter, no less emphatically ; *through COVETOUSNESS shall they with feigned Words MAKE MERCHANDIZE of you.* 2 Pet. ii. 3. To be greedy of, or given to *filthy Lucre*, in any Teacher of Religion, be his Doctrine ever so sound, is a Sign of a depraved and bad Heart : but to make a Trade of perverting the true Faith, to use *feigned Words* for the Sake of Gain, is superlatively wicked.

highly injurious to the Cause of Virtue and Religion. From all such we should most heartily pray to God to deliver us.

“ Heresy, and Schism,” which next follow, are, I think, in the Scripture-Language so far of the same Signification, as they both imply a Division, or Separation. Only *Heresy* seems to include in it an obstinate maintaining of some *false Doctrines*, which *Schism* does not. For Men may forsake the established Church out of a Dislike to some Forms, or Ceremonies, or Points of Discipline, and still adhere to the essential Articles of Faith; which I am willing to suppose is the Case of many of our Dissenters. Now these are certainly not guilty of Heresy, though they are of Schism. But when any Sect maintains and teaches Doctrines contrary to the Gospel, or to the true orthodox Faith; these are, in the strictest and fullest Sense of the Word, Heretics^x.

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^x There is no Word, perhaps, throughout the whole Bible, about the Meaning of which there has been so much disputing and cavilling, as about *Heresy* and *Heretics*. To give so exact and precise a Definition of this or any other Terms, as not to be liable to Exception from Men who are fond of disputing,

Such were the Sadducees among the Jews, who *denied the Resurrection*, and the Existence of *Angels and Spirits*; and so they are expressly called in the Acts of the Apostles, Ch. v. 17: where what we translate, *the SECT of the Sadducees*, is in the Original, *the HERESY of the Sadducees*. And such, I fear, are some of our modern Sectaries, the Leaders of them at least, who, like the *false Teachers* foretold by St. Peter, have *brought in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them*; or, as St. Jude expresses it, *denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ*. For so they certainly do, who deny his Divinity, and the Doctrines of the Satisfaction, of his Sacrifice on

is, I think, absolutely impossible. The general Sense of these Words in the New Testament (where only they occur) is surely sufficiently plain and obvious. They always denote a *Division*, or *Separation*; and are constantly used in a *bad Sense*, to signify a *causeless* or *groundless* Separation, and also an holding and propagating of some false Doctrine. Most unjustly therefore does the Church of Rome charge us with Heresy, for departing from her Communion, which we did upon the best Grounds, and for the most urgent Reasons, possible: since they had departed so notoriously from the true Faith and Doctrine of Christ, as taught in the primitive Church. Our Separation from a *false* Church was, properly speaking, a *Return* to the true one.

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the Cross, and our consequent Redemption by Him; which are the professed Tenets of the Socinians, and of other Teachers among the Separatists, though they do not assume that Name. — But the Word Heresy, in our common Acceptation of it, is not confined to Sects, and distinct Bodies of Men, but is used to signify a Departure from the true Faith, or a Belief of false Doctrines, whether among Individuals or Parties, whether in, or out of, the Pale of the established Church. And in this Sense, I am afraid, Heresy prevails too much even among those of our own Communion; many of whom most absurdly join in a Worship, which according to their Notions is idolatrous, and are therefore, in the truest Sense of the Word, what the Apostle calls, SELF-CONDEMNED. Tit. iii. 11. As there were *false Prophets* in the Jewish, so there have ever been, and still are, *false Teachers* in the Christian Church, who will shake and pervert the Faith of *unstable* Men. Of such our Lord, and his Apostles, bid us *beware*; telling us, that *it must needs be that Offences and Heresies come*, as Trials of our Faith and Constancy :

Constancy: *but Wo to that Man, by whom the Offence cometh !* Matt. xviii. 7. For, however some Persons may plead for free-thinking, and free-teaching, the Word of God still holds good, condemning HERESIES, among the *Works of the Flesh*, which shall certainly exclude Men from the *Kingdom of God*; and commanding us to *hold fast, and earnestly contend for, the Faith, which was once delivered unto the Saints*; and which, like it's blessed Author, is *the same Yesterday, To-day, and for ever.*

“Schism,” as I observed before, signifies a Division or Separation; and whatever the Occasion or Pretence for it may be, it is

There can be but one just Cause of separating from an established Church; which is, “that the Terms of her Communion are *sinful*.” And since this never has been, nor can be, proved of the Church of England; to separate from her on any other Account, is certainly, in the true, literal, Scripture Sense of the Word, *schismatical*; and therefore *criminal*. Men may dispute as long as they please about the Form and Colour of a Garment, the Mode of building a Church, and the like; nay they may go farther, and point out some trifling Defects and Inaccuracies in our Liturgy; but what will all this signify, when put in the Scale against breaking the Peace and Unity of the Church, and sowing Discord among the Fellow-members of the Body of Christ? or how, do we imagine, will such Pleas be accepted at the Tribunal of Him, who is THE AUTHOR OF PEACE, AND LOVER OF CONCORD?

certainly

certainly highly criminal, as being inconsistent with that Unity and Concord, which ought to subsist among the Members of the Body of Christ. The inspired Apostle, whose Judgment in this Case we ought surely to prefer to that of any modern Teacher, is most express and earnest in his Condemnation of Schism. *I beseech you, Brethren, says he, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same Thing, and that there be no DIVISIONS (in the Original it is, NO SCHISMS) among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment.* 1 Cor. i. 10. This is very different from the Doctrine of our Free-thinkers, and Sectaries. Now what these *Schisms* were, he shews us in the 12th Verse. *Every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ,* It does not appear, that they differed about *Essentials* (consequently were not guilty of *Heresy*) but their Crime lay in forming themselves into separate Parties, or Factions; in departing, not from the *Faith*, but from the *Unity*, of the Church. Most justly therefore does the Apostle ask them; *Is Christ divided?*

*divided? Why then are ye? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the Name of Paul? Why then do ye distinguish yourselves as Followers of Paul, or of Apollos, or of any other Teacher, instead of being united in one Body as Disciples of one common Lord, and Master, and Saviour, even of Christ? How does this Reproof of the Corinthians condemn all our Sectaries, who forsake a Church, whose Doctrines they do not pretend to find Fault with, merely on Account of some trifling Differences in Matters of Form and Ceremony? How clearly also does it condemn those Members of the established Church, who attach themselves to particular Teachers, deserting their own lawful Ministers! If an Apostle of Christ utterly disclaimed, and severely re-proved, all such Attachment, surely none of his fallible Successors can have any Title to it. If he commanded *all Things* to be *done decently, and in Order*, what Excuse can be pleaded for the Confusions and Disorder, which so manifestly prevail, and are encouraged by too many Teachers, even by regularly ordained Clergymen amongst us?—*

May

May it please *the* GOD OF LOVE, *who is not the Author of Confusion, but of Peace*, to deliver this distracted Church and Nation from these daily-increasing Evils ! and “ to make us all of one Heart, and of one Soul, united in one Bond of Truth and Peace, of Faith and Charity, for Jesus Christ his Sake !”
Amen !

The last Evil we pray against, and the most to be dreaded of all the divine Judgements in this Life, is an hardened Heart. “ From Hardness of Heart, and Contempt of thy Word and Commandment.”—These are properly joined together, the one being a sure Sign of the other. For when a Man not only disobeys the Laws of God, but treats them with Ridicule and Contempt ; when he *despises the Riches of his Goodness, and Forbearance, and Long-suffering* ; when he is neither *awed by the Terrors of the Lord*, nor *led by his Goodness to Repentance* ; he may be then said to have his Heart hardened ; the divine Grace, which he has so long slighted, is withdrawn from him ; and he is left to walk in his own Counsels, and to *perish in his own Corruption*. From this
abandoned

abandoned and desperate State how fervently ought we to pray to be delivered ! and that we may not fall into it, how careful should we be to shun *the Counsel*, and Company, of *the ungodly*, to stand not in *the Way of Sinners*, and above all, not to sit in *the Seat of the SCORNFUL* ; of those SCOFFERS, and MOCKERS of God and Religion, who walk after *their own ungodly Lusts* ; who are sensual, having not *the Spirit* ! Jude 18, 19. But let our *Delight be in the Law of the Lord*, which is perfect, converting the Soul ; let us seek Him with *the whole Heart*, and diligently keep his *Commandments*.

Having now enumerated the several Evils from which we pray our merciful Redeemer to deliver us, we proceed to urge our Supplication, not from any Worth or Merit of our own, (for we are all “ miserable Sinners”) but by pleading what He has done and suffered for us ; the Particulars whereof are here recited — And first, we entreat Him “ by the Mystery of his holy Incarnation ;” by that amazing and stupendous Instance of his Love and Goodness, in divesting Himself of divine Bliss and Glory, and submitting to become

become Man for our Sakes — “ by his holy Nativity,” or Birth of a pure Virgin ; which is called *holy*, on Account of his having been conceived by the Holy Ghost, and consequently brought into this World perfectly free from all original Sin and Pollution, wherewith every Son of Adam is infected — “ by his Circumcision, and Baptism ; whereby He *fulfilled all Righteousness*, shewing Himself a Pattern of perfect Obedience to all the Laws, and Ordinances of God — “ by his Fasting,” in which He endured the Pains and Misery of extreme Hunger and Thirst, denying Himself the Use of the good Creatures of God, to expiate our Abuse of them, and to give us an Example of Mortification” — “ by

² Fasting is certainly a Part of our Christian Duty, though the ridiculous and superstitious Practices of the Papists have brought it into Disrepute, and the right and rational Performance of it seems to be almost totally laid aside. But to argue from the *Abuse* of any Thing against the *Use* of it, is most absurd. Not to insist upon the Precepts about Fasting delivered in the Old Testament, our Saviour’s Instructions concerning it in his Sermon on the Mount put it out of all Dispute, that it is a Duty incumbent on Christians. WHEN YE FAST, *be not as the Hypocrites*, &c. Matt. vi. 16. This plainly implies, that *we are to fast* ; only, to do it acceptably, we must avoid all outward Show, and pharisaical Ostentation. The Direction is
exactly

—“by his Temptation,” or Conflict with Satan; to which He graciously condescended, that He might be *able to succour them that are*

exactly the same with the foregoing one about Prayer. Sincerity and Humility are the main Qualifications to recommend our Discharge of both these Duties to God. And with respect to Fasting in particular, the End of it is plainly, not to hurt the Body, but to *afflict the Soul* (that is, to bring us to a due Sense of, and hearty Sorrow for, our Sins) not to make us unhappy in this World, but to fit and prepare us for eternal Happiness in the next. Such a Degree of Abstinence, therefore, as we find to be conducive to this End, is all that is required of us. To lay down general Rules for this Purpose, is difficult, if not impossible. Every Man, that will deal fairly and honestly with himself, must be the best Judge, what his own particular Constitution demands, and what it will bear. To injure his Health, is by no Means required. To refrain from particular Sorts of Food, and eat punctiliously at certain stated Hours, is idle and foolish. To be intemperate and abstemious by Turns, to fast one Day in order to atone for feasting to Excess on another, is wicked and hypocritical. To abstain from Sin *at all Times*, to mortify and subdue our Passions and Appetites, and keep them within the Bounds of Religion, ought to be the constant Aim and grand Business of our Lives. Having this End always in View, we need never be at a Loss for the proper Means whereby to attain it: one of which undoubtedly is a prudent Regulation of our *ordinary* eating and drinking, which is in some Sense keeping a *continual* Fast. On particular and solemn Occasions an *extraordinary* Degree of Abstinence is proper and useful: but great Care should be taken even then, to refrain from all needless Severities, superstitious Observances, and affected Gloominess and Dejection.

tempted, being touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities, and that He might teach us how to resist Temptations — “by his Agony and bloody Sweat;” when He underwent the most excruciating Pains of Body, and Anguish of Soul, for our Sins — “by his Cross and Passion;” whereby He *hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us*, suffering the Torments which we deserved — “by his precious Death,” which was “a full, perfect, and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction, for the Sins of the whole World” — “and Burial;” a further Evidence of his great Humility, in stooping to the Grave, that He might redeem us from the Power of it — “by his glorious Resurrection;” whereby He has “restored to us everlasting Life” — and his “Ascension” into Heaven, to prepare a Place for us, and receive us into Glory — and lastly, “by the Coming of the Holy Ghost,” to comfort and support, to guide and direct us, until our Lord’s second Coming to Judgment. By all these powerful and prevailing Motives we beseech our good and merciful Saviour to “deliver us;” that through the Efficacy of his Intercession,

Intercession, and the Assistance of his Spirit, we may reap the Benefits of all that he has done and suffered for us — So careful is our Church, on every Occasion, to direct our Thoughts to the Merits of Christ, as the sole Foundation of our Hope and Confidence; which Merits are not confined merely to his Death, and Sufferings on the Cross, but extend to, and include, the whole Mystery of his Love, from his being conceived by the Holy Spirit, to his leaving the World to send the Comforter from Heaven — With what Joy and Rapture must a devout Soul meditate on all the Instances of divine Love here enumerated! And with what *full Assurance of Faith* may we offer up our last Petition for Deliverance; beseeching our Almighty Saviour to deliver us, “in all Time of our Tribulation, in all Time of our Wealth” — * that is, as well in our Pros-

X 2 perity,

* A Petition for Deliverance in the Time of Wealth and Prosperity may appear to a worldly-minded Person needless, if not absurd. But our blessed Lord teaches us a very different Lesson; warning us, in the strongest Terms, of the great Danger attending a State of Affluence; which our daily Experience and Observation must abundantly confirm. The Jews of old

perity, as Adversity; from the Dangers and Temptations that beset us in every Condition of Life — “in the Hour of Death,” when we shall undergo our last Struggle with the Powers of Darkness, and feel the last of the Miseries of this frail State — and above all, “in the Day of Judgment” — that then our Deliverance may be compleated by the absolving Sentence of our great High Priest and Judge, and we may be received into the Mansions of Bliss and Glory, to sing Praises to God, and to the Lamb, to all Eternity! — Even so, “GOOD LORD, DELIVER US!”

Having thus finished the *Deprecations*, or Prayers for averting Evil, we proceed to what are commonly called the *Intercessions*, or Petitions for Good; for the divine Blessing on

old were a remarkable Instance of this; as Moses elegantly expresses it: *Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with Fatness; THEN he FORSOOK GOD which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation.* Deut. xxxii. 15. And the Prophet, to the same Effect; *They were filled, and their Heart was exalted: THEREFORE have they FORGOTTEN ME.* Hof. xiii. 6. If, therefore, to forget and forsake God, be too often the Consequence of a prosperous Condition; how earnestly ought we to pray for his Grace, to deliver us from the Power of its Temptations!

ourselves,

ourselves, our Church, and Country; on the whole Church of Christ, and on all Mankind. — This Part of our Litany is very properly introduced with the following Supplication: “We Sinners do beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord God!” We acknowledge ourselves unworthy, through our manifold Sins, to offer up our Prayers to Thee, who art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and hast declared, that *Thou bearest not Sinners!* Yet, for the Sake of *Jesus Christ the Righteous*, we beseech Thee to receive us, though vile and sinful, yet humble and penitent; and mercifully to accept our Petitions, which we are now going to present to Thee — “and that it may please Thee to rule and govern thy holy Church universal in the right Way;” This Sentence is not compleat, till the People have answered, “We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.” The Sense, and Stopping, shew this here, as well as in the former Part; and all these Intercessions should be read accordingly. We begin with praying for the Church; not for our own Church in particular, but for the whole, or “universal Church,” dispersed throughout the World;

that God would “rule and govern it in the right Way” — ^b in the Way of Truth and Holiness, of Faith and Charity. We then pray for our most gracious and excellent Sovereign, the Supreme Head and Governor of our Church, under Christ; that the Almighty Ruler of Princes would “keep and strengthen” him in his true Worship and Obedience, in his “Faith, Fear, and Love;” and make him a shining Example of Piety, and Virtue — that He would “be his Defender and Keeper, giving him the Victory over all his Enemies” — And God forbid, that any of us should be found in that Number! or that we should pray for the divine Vengeance to fall on our own Heads! Let us rather thank the Giver of all good Gifts and spiritual Graces, for having bestowed them so plentifully on his anointed Servant now set over us; and let us shew our Gratitude for this Instance of his Goodness, by the most unfeigned Love, and dutiful Obedience, to the Defender of the Faith, and Father of his People. The next

^b *And an Highway shall be there, and a Way, and it shall be called THE WAY OF HOLINESS. II. xxxv. 8.*

Petition

Petition is for “all the Royal Family”—whom we should heartily pray unto God “to bless and preserve,” both here and hereafter; beseeching Him, that there may never be wanting one of the Race, to succeed in the Government of these Kingdoms.

After praying for the King, and his Family, we proceed, according to the Apostolical Rule, to pray for *all that are put in Authority*; for our Governors both in Church and State; to whom we owe a suitable Obedience, as they are appointed by, and act under, the supreme regal Power. This is plainly the Scripture-Doctrine, which directs us to *submit ourselves to EVERY ORDINANCE of Man* (that is, to *all Men* bearing Rule and Authority) *for the Lord's Sake: whether it be to the King, as supreme; or unto GOVERNORS, as unto them that are sent by him, &c.* 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. So that to think the Duty of Subjects is confined to the Person of the King, and that while they profess Loyalty to Him, they are at Liberty to revile and disobey his subordinate Officers and Ministers, is a most vain and absurd Notion of modern Politics, directly contrary to the

Word of Truth. Such a *partial* Obedience is only a lesser Kind of Rebellion : and who-soever *resists*, or *rebels* against, *the Power*, which is of God (derived from, and ordained by, Him ; who is the Source and Origin of all Power and Dominion) does undoubtedly *rebel* against GOD HIMSELF. But to return to the Litany. — We first offer up a Petition for our Church-Governors, the “ Bishops ;” to whom we join the inferior Orders of “ Priests and Deacons ;” that it may please Him, whose *Stewards* and *Ministers* they are, to “ illuminate,” or enlighten, them “ with true Knowledge and Understanding of his Word, and that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth, and shew it accordingly.” — A most useful and instructive Lesson this to the Clergy of every Denomination, who should hence learn to consider the Scriptures as the Fund of all true and valuable Knowledge ; to apply themselves diligently to the Study of them, in their original Languages ; not to amuse their Flocks with abstruse philosophical Speculations, and moral Essays derived from
Heathen-

Heathen-Writers; but to feed them with the pure Word of God, unmixed with *the Traditions of Men*, and *the Rudiments of the World*, which are *not after Christ*.—And that their preaching may be effectual, they must above all Things be careful to *adorn* their *Doctrine* by the Purity and Holiness of their Lives; without which they will not, they cannot, be regarded. It is a Rule, I believe, without any Exception, that a bad Liver, though he may be a good Preacher, is never a successful one. And in general it may be truly observed, that in Proportion as a Clergyman bends his Thoughts and Attention to worldly and secular Concerns, be they ever so innocent in themselves, he will be so much the less respected; and his Instructions, whether in public or private, will have so much the less Weight. Let him be wholly intent on the Duties of his high Calling, let him be zealous and in earnest, and he will never fail of meeting with Respect to his Person, and Success in his Ministry. Let him frame his Life and Doctrine by the excellent Rules given by St. Paul to those bright Ornaments
of

of the primitive Church, Timothy and Titus, and he may rest assured, that *his Labours will not be in vain in the Lord*; but that he will be the happy Instrument of *saving the Souls of many that hear him*. With what Joy and Comfort may such an one look forward to that blessed Time, when, according to the sure Promise of God, they that have *turned many to Righteousness*, shall receive a distinguished Share of Glory, and *shine as the Stars for ever and ever!*

We pray in the next Place for our Governors in the State: first for “the Lords of the Council,” that is, for the several Members of his Majesty’s most honourable Privy Council, who have a principal Share in the Government of these Realms; and then for “the Nobility” in general, who compose the second Branch of the Legislature; that God would “endue them with Grace, Wisdom, and Understanding”—that they may faithfully and conscientiously discharge the great and important Duties belonging to their respective Callings—that they may be as conspicuous for their exemplary Lives, as for their high Stations—always remembering, that *the Fear*

of

of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom; that it is Honour, and Glory, and Gladness, and a Crown of rejoicing; and that the Praise of it, and of it only, endureth for ever.

We next implore the divine Grace, Blessing, and Protection on "the Magistrates"—that they may thereby be disposed, and enabled, "to execute Justice, and to maintain Truth"—or, as it is more fully expressed in the Prayer for the Church militant, to maintain "God's true Religion and Virtue."—How much the Promotion of these great and glorious Ends depends on the due Discharge of the Magistrate's Office, and on the vigorous and impartial Execution of our excellent Laws, is too plain and obvious to require much enlarging on. An Excess of Lenity and Forbearance in this Respect is often highly injurious to the Community. To spare one Offender, is generally the Means of multiplying Offences; not only by letting the Criminal loose, but as it encourages others to follow his Example, when they see they may transgress with Impunity. *If thou do that which is evil, be afraid;* says the Apostle. But in order to preserve this

Fear,

Fear, let us attend to what follows : *for He beareth not the Sword in vain : for He is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doeth Evil.* Rom. xiii. 4. Therefore, to deter Men from *doing Evil*, Justice must be administered, and the Sword employed. This is the Duty of Magistrates. What our's is to them, the Scripture will no less clearly inform us.—*Put them in Mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to OBEY MAGISTRATES—to speak Evil of no Man.* Tit. iii. 12. How different are these Precepts of the Apostle from the Doctrine, and Practice, of modern Patriotism ! To oppose, asperse, abuse, assault^c ; all such, I mean, as are not the popular Favourites ; *to despise Government, and speak Evil of DIGNITIES* ; these seem to be the Maxims of our deluded Rabble. And shall any one

^c This is no exaggerated Account. Not content with scurrilous Language, the People have frequently of late proceeded to open Violence, and put the worthiest Magistrates in imminent Danger of their Lives. While they cry out for the Freedom of Election, they endeavour by every wicked Art, as well as by downright Force, to bring their Favourites into Office ; and if not restrained in their Fury, would have killed many an honest Candidate, and unpopular Elector.

say,

say, that "the Voice of the People is the Voice of God?" I am sure their *Actions*, in this Case, proceed from a very different Spirit. The Scriptures call such, PRESUMPTUOUS, SELF-WILLED. 2 Pet. ii. 10—*using their Liberty for a Cloak of Maliciousness*, (or rather, *of Wickedness*) which is put in direct Opposition to being *Servants of God*. 1 Pet. ii. 16.

After having prayed for our Rulers and Magistrates, we offer up a Petition for "all the People," recommending them to the divine Blessing and Protection. The Words "all *thy* People," seem designed to include all Christians in general, who are, like the Jews of old, the *peculiar People* of God: and yet, I apprehend, we are to pray here more particularly for the People of this Land.—The next Petition is *unlimited* "to give to ALL NATIONS Unity, Peace, and Concord"—that, in the Language of the Prophet, they may *beat their Swords into Ploughshares, and their Spears into Pruning-hooks*; that *Nation may not lift up Sword against Nation*, neither may they learn *War any more*. Is. ii. 4. And while we thus pray for universal

Peace

Peace and Concord, how diligent and earnest should we be in promoting it amongst ourselves ! in suppressing; and preventing, as far as we are able, all Feuds and Animosities, and whatsoever may tend to disturb private Harmony, or public Peace ! Let us but *dwell together in Unity*, trusting in the divine Providence ; and we need *not fear what Man*, what any foreign Power, *can do unto us*.

The four following Petitions for spiritual Blessings are very happily expressed, and afford us ample Matter of the most useful Instruction. The first points out to us the Source of all our Evils, the Corruption of the Heart ; and directs us to apply to the Fountain of all Holiness, to cleanse and sanctify it—" to *give us an Heart, &c.*" or, as the Psalmist expresses it, to *create in us a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within us* — " an Heart to love and dread Thee, and diligently to live after thy Commandments." Here we see the true Principles of Christian Obedience, as they are every where set forth in Scripture, namely, the Love and Fear of God ; which are so far from being inconsistent with each other, that they are really

really inseparable; the one deterring us from Sin, the other exciting us to Virtue and Righteousness. It would be endless to quote Texts, where these grand Motives to Obedience are enforced; the Bible being full of them throughout. I will mention one, however, where they are both put together, as they are in this Petition in our Litany. It is where Moses sums up his Exhortations to the Israelites in these expressive Words: *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to FEAR THE LORD THY GOD, to walk in all his Ways, and to LOVE Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, to keep the Commandments of the Lord, and his Statutes, which I command thee this Day for thy Good?* Deut. x. 12, 13. The royal Preacher concludes his Discourse to the same Effect, but more shortly, thus: *FEAR GOD, and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole Duty (or the whole Business) of Man.* Eccles. 12, 13. And St. John tells us; *this is the LOVE OF GOD, that we keep his Commandments.* 1 John v. 3. In the former Passage, the Fear of God evidently includes the

the Love of Him; as in the latter the Love does by no Means exclude the Fear: the following Words being the same in each, that we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS. With the strictest Propriety, therefore, are we taught to pray for "an Heart" disposed "to love, and dread," (or fear) God, and "diligently to live after" (or, according to) "his Commandments."—But we must not stop here. For the Heart, however purified, or well-disposed for the present, would soon relapse into it's former Pollutions, without the constant Aid and Support of the same divine Power, which at first cleansed it. We therefore proceed to ask of our heavenly Father, and that not only for ourselves, but for "all his People, Increase of Grace;" (that, as our Church elsewhere expresses it^d, we "may daily be renewed by his Holy Spirit") "to hear meekly thy Word"—to have Recourse, not to the fallible Systems of human Moralists, but to the infallible Word of God, for Instruction in our Duty; to attend to it with the most profound Hu-

^dIn the Collect for Christmas-Day.

mility

mility and Reverence, “ and to receive it with pure Affection ;” with a sincere and hearty Desire of being improved by it—and lastly, that, making it the constant and only Guide and Rule of our Actions, we may be enabled “ to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit”—to be *fruitful in every good Work.*—The Sense of these two last Petitions in the Litany may, I think, be thus briefly expressed in those Words of our Saviour, at the End of his Parable of the Sower ; “ Give us, O Lord, *an honest and good Heart, that, having heard the Word, we may keep it, and bring forth Fruit with Patience.*” It is well worth remarking, how careful our Church is, both here and in every Part of her excellent Liturgy, to give us right Notions of the Rule of our Duty ; and to guard us against the Delusions of the Deist on one Side, and of the Enthusiast on the other. She tells us nothing of the Law of Nature^e, the moral

Y Fitness

^e To have Recourse to the Law of Nature, to inform our Minds, or direct our Conduct by, in the Midst of the glorious Light of the Gospel of Christ ; is certainly as irrational and absurd, as it would be to use a Candle, while the Sun shines
at

Fitness of Things, or the Beauty of Virtue; Phrases which abound in the Writings of our elegant modern Divines. No: she refers us to the WORD OF GOD, as the only Rule of Faith and Practice.—Are we doubtful in any Case how to act? We are not sent to Plato, or Tully, for Information. But the Question is: *What faith the Scripture? How readeſt thou?* That will solve all our Difficulties, and instruct us fully in all necessary Truth.—On the other Hand, the fancied Impulses, and extraordinary Inspirations of the hot-headed Enthusiast meet with no Countenance from our Church; who, though she strongly maintains the Necessity and Efficacy of divine Grace, yet teaches us to consult the *written Word*, to hear it meekly, and receive it affectionately, *in order* “to bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit.”

The next Petition is, “that it may please God

at Noon-Day. Besides, we read of *another Law* in our Members, warring against the Law of our Mind, and bringing us into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in our Members: from which, if we believe the Apostle, there is no Deliverance, but THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. See Rom. vii, three last Verses, and the Chapter throughout; where the Insufficiency of natural Religion, or of the Law of Nature, is fully demonstrated.

to bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred, and are deceived."—In which we pray (as it is more fully expressed in the last Collect for Good Friday) for the Conversion of "all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics"—and I think, we may very properly include the Members of the Church of Rome, who are certainly greatly *departed* from *the Way of Truth*, and have egregiously erred, "not only in their Living, and Manner of Ceremonies, but also in Matters of Faith"^f. For these, and for all others, who are unhappily misled by the Spirit of Error and Delusion, let us offer up our fervent Prayers to the common Lord and Father of all Men; that it may please Him to have Mercy upon them, to remove their Ignorance, and Hardness of Heart, and to bring them into the Light of his Truth, and into the Way of Holiness and Salvation. And while we avoid their Errors, and detest their pernicious Doctrines and evil Practices, let us bear no Ill-will to their Persons, much less encourage any Persecution or Oppression of them for their religious Opinions; but treat

^f 19th Article.

them on all Occasions with Kindness and Humanity, in *the Spirit of Meekness* and Charity, which is the Spirit of Christ.

To see the Force and Propriety of the following Petition, we must remember that our Condition in this Life is represented in Scripture as a State of *Warfare*; wherein we are to fight, under Christ, the great *Captain of our Salvation*, against our three grand Enemies, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. For the several Members of the Church *Militant*, engaged in this spiritual Combat, we here implore the divine Aid and Protection; and first, "to strengthen such as do stand;" that is, such as fight valiantly, being firm to the Principles of their Faith, and constant in the Practice of their Duty; neither yielding to the open Assaults, nor falling into the secret Snares, of the Enemy. For these we pray, that God would continue to be their *Strength and Shield*, and enable them to persevere and *overcome*; since, however firmly they now stand, without his Support they must soon fall, and perish. The next Class of Combatants are "the weak-hearted;" such as grow weary and faint, fearful

fearful and dispirited, despairing of Victory, and therefore almost ready to yield ; in great Danger of *falling*, though not actually *fallen*, into the Power of Satan. For these we entreat *the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort*, whose *Strength is made perfect in Weakness*, “ to comfort and help ” them ; to revive their drooping Spirits, to give them fresh Vigour and Courage, and strengthen them with *Might in the inner Man* ; that they may be able to *withstand in the evil Day, and having done all, to stand*. The third and last Order in this spiritual Warfare are they “ that fall ; ” such as have given Way, and been thrown down, though not absolutely vanquished, and destroyed : who have yielded to many Temptations, and fallen into divers Sins, but are not yet hardened in Iniquity. These we pray God “ to raise up ” by his Almighty Power, and to *renew* them *again unto Repentance*, that they may stand up in their Rank, and continue the Fight ; and that, being thus restored, He would *keep* them *from falling* any more. The last Clause in this Petition is of general Application, that it would please God “ finally to beat

down Satan under our Feet," that, whatever Difficulties we may have to encounter, or whatever Advantages our Adversary may gain over us, for a while, we may still go on resolutely and courageously, 'till at Length we obtain a complete Victory, and receive the promised Reward. *For to him that OVERCOMETH, says our blessed Redeemer, will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the Midst of the Paradise of God — To HIM will I give Power over the Nations — To HIM will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also OVERCAME, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.* Rev. xxvii. 26. and iii. 21.

Thus far for our *spiritual* Wants and Necessities. We now turn our Thoughts to such as relate to the Body; beseeching Him, who alone is *our Refuge and Strength, and a very present Help in Trouble*, "to succour, help, and comfort, all that are" in any Sort of "Danger, Necessity, or Tribulation." We then pray, more particularly, for the Preservation of "Travellers, of Women in the Pangs and Danger of Child-birth, of all Sick Persons, and Young Children"—for "all Prisoners and Captives"—for Orphans,
" and

“and Widows;” and all Persons, in general, “that are desolate and oppressed.” And while we recommend them to the Care and Mercy of God, let us ever be mindful to accompany our Prayers with our good Deeds; remembering, that *to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction*, and to relieve and assist the distressed, is a principal Part of *true Religion*, a peculiar and indispensable Duty of a Disciple of Christ ^s.

^s As our blessed Lord has made LOVE or CHARITY in general the distinguishing Mark of his Disciples, so He has laid a very particular Stress on the Exercise of that Branch of it, which consists in Acts of Mercy and Benevolence. In his Account of the Day of Judgment, He mentions these as the peculiar Test of every Man's Obedience and Fidelity; on which his everlasting State of Happiness or Misery will in a great Measure depend. It is melancholy to observe, how little the Generality of professed Christians seem to regard these Declarations of their Master. Public Charities, it is true, meet with no small Encouragement; but private Donations, I fear, are very rare and sparing; or at least confined to particular Favorites and Dependents, while by far the greater Part of distressed Objects are left to starve and perish. At Christmas perhaps, the rich and affluent will set apart some little Portion of their Wealth for charitable Uses; and indeed we can never more properly shew our Love to our Brethren, than when we commemorate the Love of our Redeemer to ourselves. But Charity should be limited to no Time or Season. *The Poor we have ALWAYS with us*; and it is a Duty *always* incumbent on us, to relieve them.

The next Petition is the shortest, but most comprehensive of all, “that it may please Thee to have Mercy upon all Men.” How proper, and reasonable, and perfectly agreeable to the Spirit of the Gospel, this Petition is, must surely appear at first Sight to every unprejudiced Person; though it has not escaped the Censure of some rigid Calvinists, who had rather evade, or pervert, a plain and positive Injunction of an inspired Apostle, than give up their favorite Notions of absolute Election and Reprobation. But not to enter into any Controversy on those Points, at present, let it suffice to observe, that to pray to the God and Father of all Men, who is *good to all*, and whose *tender Mercies are over all his Works*; who has declared, that He would *have all Men to be saved*, and that his blessed Son *tasted Death for every Man*, without any Reserve or Exception; to pray to Him, I say, “that He would have Mercy upon ALL MEN,” is as much warranted by Reason, as it is clearly commanded in Scripture; where we are required both to *pray for*, and to *do Good unto*, ALL MEN, without any Limitation whatsoever,

In

In the same Spirit of true Christian Benevolence, and in Conformity to the Practice, as well as Precept, of our gracious Redeemer, we proceed to pray for all "our Enemies, Persecutors, and Slanders;" that it may please God to "forgive them, and to turn their Hearts." Which Request we make, not so much for our own Sakes, that they may cease to injure or molest us; as for their's, that by their Hearts being changed, they may be restored into a State of Salvation, which no Man is in, that lives in Hatred and Enmity, or that persecutes, or slanders, his Fellow-Creatures: for HE, THAT LOVETH NOT HIS BROTHER, ABIDETH IN DEATH. I John. iii. 14.

The following Petition seems to be taken from that in the Lord's Prayer; "Give us this Day our daily Bread." For here, in like Manner, we pray for a constant Supply of our necessary Food and Sustenance; when we beseech our heavenly Father "to give and preserve to our Use the kindly Fruits of the Earth, so as in due Time we may enjoy them." In this pious Supplication we acknowledge Him to be the Giver and Preserver

server of all good Things, which were at first created by his Word, before there were any second Causes to produce them; and are still continued to us by the same all-powerful and bounteous Hand, which has all Nature at his Command: Who *visiteth the Earth, and watereth, and greatly enricheth it; who bringeth forth Food out of it; who prepareth our Corn to cover over the Valleys; who clotheth the Pastures with Flocks; and crowneth the Year with his Goodness; filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness.* But let us remember that He can, with equal Ease, *turn Rivers into a Wilderness, and the Water-Springs into dry Ground: a fruitful Land into Barrenness, for the Wickedness of them that dwell therein: and that, except the Lord bless the Earth, their Labour is but lost* that cultivate it.

We are now come to the last, and most important, of all the Petitions; wherein we pray for “true Repentance,” for the Forgiveness of all our Sins, and for Grace to avoid them, and “amend our Lives,” for the Time to come. The Nature and Necessity of true Repentance, in the Scripture Sense of the Word, have been fully
shewn

shewn in my Remarks on the Absolution ; in which we are directed to pray to God “ to grant it us,” as we do also here ; since it is by the Influence of his Holy Spirit alone that we are disposed to set about, and enabled to go through, this great and necessary Work. That Part of the Petition, which relates to our Forgiveness, is somewhat differently worded from what we meet with in other Places in the Liturgy ; for here is a three-fold Distinction of “ Sins, Negligences, and Ignorances ;” for all which we implore the divine Pardon. By the first, I apprehend, we are to understand our gross, and deliberate Transgressions ; the Recollection of which should fill us with the deepest Sorrow, and most bitter Remorse. By the second are meant our lesser Sins, into which we have been led by Inadvertency, Carelessness, or Surprise ; how many of which, alas ! do the very best of us daily run into ! And though these are by no Means of so heinous a Nature as the former, yet still they are Sins, and ought to be acknowledged and repented of. All *Negligences* are at least to be considered as Sins of *Omission*, inasmuch as they

they are contrary to that *Care* and *Watchfulness*, so expressly required of us in the Gospel. “Ignorances,” which are the last mentioned, are so far sinful and criminal, as they are in any Degree voluntary, or owing to a Neglect of using the proper Means of attaining Knowledge. Where Ignorance is absolutely *unavoidable*, it is a Misfortune indeed, but no Sin : but to plead it in any other Case, is rather an Aggravation, than any Extenuation, of our Guilt. How far a Plea of this Sort may be accepted from an Heathen, it is no Business of ours to enquire. The Rules of *our* Duty are clearly made known to us ; and if we *mistake* at any Time in the Application of them, our Error, I fear, will be chargeable to us, as proceeding from a criminal Negligence, if not from a wilful and perverse Ignorance. — For all our manifold Offences of this Sort, as well as for our grosser Trespasses, we must daily ask Forgiveness ; praying, in the last Place, that God would “endue us with the Grace of his Holy Spirit, to amend our Lives according to his holy Word.” For without the Help of his Grace we *can do nothing* ;
nor

nor must we expect that Help, unless we are diligent in using the Means of obtaining it; one of which is, to study his *holy Word*, wherein the Will of God is revealed to us by the same Spirit that enables us to perform it. And by this Word we must regulate our Lives, in order to prove the Sincerity of our Repentance, and to obtain the Pardon of our Sins.

The Form of the Litany is now agreeably varied. The longer Intercessions being ended, here follow some shorter ones, admirably calculated to give fresh Vigour and Earnestness to our Devotion. For I am very sure, that no Person, who has attended seriously to the foregoing Part, can join in this without feeling a peculiar Warmth and Fervency in his Mind, while he thus renews his Supplications, with an holy Importunity, to the Throne of Grace. But to answer the pious Design of our Church, and that these Incentives to Devotion may have their full Effect, it is necessary that the Minister, who officiates, should read every Sentence with great Energy and Deliberation; making a proper Pause after each, that the
People

People may have Time to answer. The slovenly Manner, in which they are sometimes huddled over, is scandalous and shocking. In the first Petition, we invoke the Blessed Jesus as the "Son of God;" or, as our Church elsewhere expresses it, the "LORD GOD, Son of the Father." In the two following, we consider Him in his State of Humiliation, as God incarnate; as the "Lamb of God" (a Title often given Him in Scripture, to signify his spotless Innocence, and Holiness) "that taketh away the Sins of the World"—the TRUE LAMB, foreshewn and represented by the Lamb *without Blemish*, which was offered in the Jewish Passover. To him we apply for that "PEACE," which by his all-sufficient Sacrifice He has procured us with the Father; for that Peace, which the World cannot give; for Peace of Mind here, and eternal Comfort and Bliss hereafter. To Him we pray for "Mercy," and for a gracious Acceptance of all our Petitions—"O CHRIST;" Thou who art anointed of the Father to be our Priest, our Prophet, and King: "O CHRIST, HEAR US."

Now

Now follows an Address to each Person in the sacred Trinity, and then the Lord's Prayer; which can never be said more opportunely, than after our Devotion has been raised by the preceding Ejaculations. Two short Petitions are added; wherein we beseech God, in the Words of the Psalmist, "not to deal with us after," or *according to*, "our Sins: neither reward us" *according to* "our Iniquities." Next comes, what is commonly called, "the Prayer against Persecution;" which, though it was first composed for, and is peculiarly adapted to, some distressed and calamitous State of the Church, is yet never unseasonable; since we are at all Times, if not in actual Distress, liable to many "Troubles and Adversities," and exposed to many "Evils," from "the Craft and Subtilty of the Devil," and wicked Men, from which we should pray to our "merciful Father" to save and deliver us. The Introduction to the Requests, we here make, is extremely proper; declaring our Reliance on the divine Mercy, which is ever ready to extend itself to the truly "contrite Heart," and "sorrowful" Suppliant. Such we profess

fess ourselves to be ; and such we must be
 in Truth and Sincerity, if we hope to be
 heard. Our first Petition is, that God would
 “ mercifully assist our Prayers,” on these and
 all such Occasions, by his Holy Spirit, which
 is said to *help our Infirmities*, and *make Inter-
 cession for us*. Rom. viii. 26. We then pray,
 that He would graciously prevent the Evils
 that threaten us, and remove those we la-
 bour under ; “ that, being hurt by no Per-
 secutions, we may evermore” celebrate his
 Goodness, and “ give Thanks” to our mighty
 Deliverer, “ in his holy Church, through
 Jesus Christ our Lord.”——Here, instead of
 saying, Amen ! the People offer up a short
 Prayer for Help and Deliverance, borrowed
 from the Psalms ; where we meet with sever-
 al pious Expressions of the like Sort, in
 which David declares his intire Confidence
 in God’s Mercy, and his earnest Desire, that
 His NAME *may be glorified throughout the
 Earth*. The Sentence before us seems to be
 taken from Ps. xlv. 26 ; which concludes
 with, *thy Mercies Sake*, according to our
 Translations ; but in some older ones, with,
 “ *thy Name’s Sake*.” So again, Ps. lxxix. 9.

Help

Help us, O God of our Salvation, for the GLORY OF THY NAME: and deliver us and purge away our Sins for THY NAME'S SAKE. In like Manner, speaking of the Deliverance of the Children of Israel out of Egypt, he says; *He saved them for HIS NAME'S SAKE; that he might make his mighty Power to be known.* Ps. cvi. 8. In the Prophecy of Isaiah we find the same Expression made Use of by God himself: *FOR MY NAME'S SAKE will I defer mine Anger.—For MINE OWN SAKE, even for MINE OWN SAKE, will I do it; for how should MY NAME be polluted?* Is. xlviii. 9—11. But, what is more immediately to our present Purpose, the Prophet Daniel, in his humble Supplication for the Restoration of Jerusalem, uses several Expressions of the same Import with that in our Litany. *O Lord! according to all THY RIGHTEOUSNESS, I beseech Thee, let thine Anger and thy Fury be turned away from this City—and cause thy Face to shine upon thy Sanctuary, that is desolate, FOR THE LORD'S SAKE^f. — For we do not present*

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our

^h This Expression, *for the Lord's Sake*, seems to point out a personal Distinction in the Deity, and to refer to the promised

our Supplications before Thee for our Righteousnesses, but for THY GREAT MERCIES — Defer not, for THINE OWN SAKE, O my God: for thy City, and thy People, are called by THY NAME. Dan. ix. 16, &c. Hence we may see the full Force and Meaning of this Petition in our Liturgy, and of that which follows presently after; where, instead of, “for thy Name’s Sake,” we say, “for thine Honour;” in both which we implore the Aid and Protection of Almighty God, not for any Merit of our own, but from a deep Sense of his boundless Mercy and Goodness; not merely that *We* may be delivered, but that *his Honour* and *Glory* may be displayed; that *Men* may know, that *He*,

mised Redeemer, who says of Himself; *I am IN THE FATHER, and the Father IN ME*, John xiv. 11: that Lord, for *whose Sake* alone the Petition of the Prophet could be heard and accepted. Many similar Passages occur in the Old Testament, shewing a Plurality of divine Persons so clearly, that no one who has not *the Vail upon his Heart*, who is not obstinately blind, can mistake their Meaning. I shall quote only one of the most remarkable. *Lo, I come, and I will dwell in the Midst of thee, saith THE LORD. And many Nations shall be joined to THE LORD in that Day, and shall be MY People: and I will dwell in the Midst of thee, and thou shalt know that THE LORD OF HOSTS hath sent ME unto thee.* Zech. ii. 10, 11. See also Psalm cx. 1.

whose

whose Name alone is JEHOVAH, is the MOST HIGH over all the Earth.——Between these two Supplications of the People, the Minister repeats a Sentence from the 44th Psalm. Ver. 1; which is used here with great Propriety, to quicken our Faith, and animate our Hopes of future Mercies, from a Recollection of those that are past. And well may we of this Nation apply this comfortable Declaration to ourselves, when we reflect on the many wonderful and “ noble Works,” that God has done for this Church and Kingdom in all Ages; in our own Times, as well as in those of our Forefathers. Let us consider, how often we have been saved from foreign Enemies; and from domestic Rebels; how wonderfully we were at first rescued, and have been since delivered, from the worst of Tyranny, the Dominion of Popery; and how no less providentially our happy Constitution in Church and State was restored in the last Century, when it had been overturned by Faction and wild Fanaticism; and has been preserved to us to this Day. How should these Thoughts encourage us to trust in the same all-powerful and

gracious Being, who *hath delivered us* from so great Calamities, that He will yet *deliver us*; provided we make Him *our Strength, and Refuge, and Hope, in the Day of Affliction*, and let not *our Hearts depart from the Lord!*—And how can we better express our Gratitude for past Blessings and Deliverances, and our Confidence in the divine Mercy for future ones, than by that noble Hymn of Praise and Adoration, the *Gloria Patri*, which is here most aptly introduced? Let us, therefore, with all possible Warmth of Devotion, give most humble and hearty Thanks, and ascribe all Honour and Glory, to God, “the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;” the unchangeable Fountain of all Goodness, and the sole Author of our Happiness, and Preservation.—This Act of Praise to the ever-blessed Trinity is followed by some devout Petitions, addressed to the second Person in it; to “Christ, the Son of

¹ The Unchangeableness and Eternity of the divine Being are pointed out to us in the 2d Verse of the *Gloria Patri*, “As it was in the Beginning,” &c.: which may be considered as a Sort of Paraphrase on the Words of God to Moses; I AM THAT I AM. *Exod. iii. 14*: or on those of St. John; HIM WHICH IS, AND WHICH WAS, AND WHICH IS TO COME. *Rev. i. 4*.

David,”

David," the promised Messiah; that *Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief, who can be touched with the Feeling of our Infirmities*; to the "Lord Christ," the Lord strong and mighty, who is able, as He is willing, to help and defend us. To Him we pray for Safety and Protection, for Pity and Forgiveness, and for a favourable Acceptance of our earnest and repeated Supplications. And lastly, we sum up all in the Words of the Psalmist: "O Lord, let thy Mercy be shewed upon us; as we do put our Trust in Thee"—or, as it is in the Original; *Let thy Mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in Thee.* Ps. xxxiii. 22; to *trust*, or *hope*, in the Lord, being a necessary Condition of our obtaining Mercy; of which we cannot be too often reminded. Here end the alternate Petitions; after which we are called upon to attend silently to the Priest, while he offers up the following excellent Prayer to God the Father. "We humbly beseech Thee, O Father," who art merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth, "mercifully to look upon our Infirmities"

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mities"—Have Pity on us, O Lord, in our weak and wretched Estate, to which our Sins have reduced us.—Thou knowest *whereof we are made*, that we are *born unto Trouble, as the Sparks fly upwards*; that by Nature we are *without Strength, dead in Trespasses and Sins*.—But, since *thy Compassions fail not*, deliver us, O gracious Father, *from the Body of this Death*; “and for the Glory of thy Name, turn from us all those Evils, that we most righteously,” and justly, “have deserved; and grant, that in all our Troubles” (which in thine infinite Wisdom Thou shalt think fit to send upon us, for the Punishment of our Offences, or for the Trial of our Faith and Patience) “we may” not repine at thy good Providence, or seek to extricate ourselves by unlawful Means, but “put our whole Trust and Confidence in thy Mercy; and,” forasmuch as we dare not presume to hope for it, unless we are careful to *maintain good Works*, grant that, by the Help of thy Grace, we may “evermore serve Thee in Holiness and Pureness of living, to thy Honour and Glory, through our only Medi-
 ator

ator and Advocate, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen!"

After the occasional Prayers and Thanksgivings, which have been already considered, we come to the Prayer of St. Chrysostom, and the Blessing; wherewith the Litany, as well as the common daily Service, very properly concludes. — It is almost a general Rule in our Liturgy (excepting in the Litany) to address our Prayers to the Person of the Father, in the Name, and through the Mediation, of Christ.—But the Prayer of St. Chrysostom is directed immediately to the Son, as appears plainly from the Promise referred to in the introductory Part (which our Saviour made in his own Person, whilst he dwelt on Earth) and also from the Omission of the usual Words, “through Jesus Christ our Lord,” at the End. Not that, when we address ourselves to one Person only in the blessed Trinity, we are to exclude the others from our Thoughts; since they are one undivided Nature or Substance, the joint Objects of our Faith and Worship. Accordingly it is justly remarked in the Nicene Creed, that “the Holy Ghost

with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;" and in the Athanasian, that "in all Things the TRINITY IN UNITY is to be *worshipped.*" Let us now consider the admirable Matter contained in the Prayer before us. In the first Place, we thankfully acknowledge the Goodness of "Almighty God," in having "given us Grace, at this Time, with one Accord to make our common Supplications unto Him;" esteeming it the highest Honour and Privilege we can enjoy in this World, thus to be admitted to worship Him in his sacred Courts. We then plead our Lord's gracious Promise (made to his Disciples, and in them to all his faithful Servants unto the End of the World) "that when two or three," when any Number great or small, "are gathered together in his Name, He will grant their Requests." For so He expressly declares: *If two of you shall agree on Earth as touching any Thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven.* Matt. xviii. 19. And to shew that He himself had a Power, jointly with the Father, of granting their

their Requests, He immediately adds : *For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there AM I in the Midst of them* : that is, ready to hear, and fulfil, their Petitions. The Words are evidently of the same Import with those used by God to Moses : *In all Places, where I record my Name, I will COME UNTO THEE, and I will BLESS THEE.* EXOD. xx. 24. In one of the last Discourses our Saviour held with his Disciples, before He suffered, we find Him renewing this Promise in the fullest and strongest Terms, *Whatsoever, says He, ye shall ask in my Name, that WILL I DO, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any Thing in my Name, I WILL DO IT.* John. xiv. 13, 14. The Expression in the Original is very emphatical : I, I MYSELF, *will do it*^m. And yet, to shew that it was the same divine Power both in the Father and the Son, He says afterwards, in the same Discourse : *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, HE WILL GIVE IT YOU.* 16. 23 : or, as He expresses himself, ch. xv. ver. 7. as if it were

on purpose to prevent any improper Distinction in our Apprehensions of the Deity; *Ye shall ask what ye will, and IT SHALL BE DONE unto you.* Trusting in this divine Promise, we proceed to pray; Fulfil now, O Lord, the Desires and Petitions of thy Servants;” the more enlarged *Desires* of our Hearts, which are open to Thee, as well as the *Petitions* of our Mouths, delivered in this our solemn Assembly; “as may be most expedient for them”—for duly sensible of our own Ignorance, and of thine infinite Knowledge and Wisdom, we do not presume to ask to have our Petitions granted *absolutely*, but *so far* only as Thou seest fitting for us. In this, however, we will venture to pray to Thee without any Reserve, or Fear of asking amiss; that Thou wilt “grant us in this World Knowledge of thy Truth,”—a true, saving, Knowledge of Thee, and of thy holy Word, such as may influence our Lives and Conversations — “and in the World to come LIFE EVERLASTING”—that when Thou, *who art* OUR LIFE, *shalt appear*, we also may *appear with Thee in Glory.* Col iii. 4.

In pursuance of the constant Practice of

the Church in all Ages, we conclude our Service with a Blessing, or benedictory Prayer: that which we here use is taken from the End of St. Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians ; and, being therefore indited by the Holy Spirit, is certainly most fit and proper to be repeated in every Christian Congregation. It is a solemn Invocation of each Person in the sacred Trinity, to bestow his Blessings upon us. And this seems to have been intended, and pointed out, though less clearly, by the Form of Benediction instituted by God in the Jewish Church, Numb. vi. 24, &c. : the triple Mention of the Name of THE LORD, or JEHOVAH, as well as the Contents of each Article, being well adapted to (if not directly implying) the Doctrine of the Trinity.—The Order, in which the three divine Persons are set down in the apostolical Blessing, is somewhat different from that which is commonly observed, the Son being here mentioned before the Father. So he is likewise by the same Apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 16. Which fully justifies us in asserting, that He is " EQUAL to the Father as touching his GODHEAD,"
(of

(of the same Rank and Dignity) however *inferior* He may be to Him with respect to his human Nature, or "Manhood." Another Thing worth remarking is, that St. Paul concludes most of his Epistles with a Blessing in the Name of CHRIST *only*. *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.* 1 Cor. xvi. 23; and the like elsewhere. But we are not to imagine, that he meant to exclude the Father and the Holy Spirit from a Share in bestowing this *Grace*, or Blessing; any more than we are to suppose them left out in the Form of Baptism, when we read, in the Acts of the Apostles, of Persons being *baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus*. It is only a short Way of speaking, whereby ONE of the divine Persons is put for the whole THREE. — Again, with respect to the Matter of the Blessing; we are not to look upon GRACE as peculiarly appropriated to the Son, or LOVE to God the Father, or FELLOWSHIP to the Holy Ghost. For if we consult the Scriptures, we shall find all these Terms applied to each of the three Persons. Thus in the Apostle's Salutation of the Church at Rome; GRACE to you, and
Peace

Peace from GOD our FATHER, and the Lord Jesus Christ: and the same in his other Epistles. So also, the Holy Ghost is expressly called *the Spirit of GRACE*. Heb. x. 29. And what we render his GIFTS; 1 Cor. xii. 4, &c., might not improperly be translated his GRACES; the Word being derived from that which we usually translate GRACE: in like Manner as the *Fruits of the Spirit* (Gal. v. 22) and elsewhere) or the Habits of Piety and Virtue produced by Him, are in our common Discourse and Writings very justly styled, GRACES. The same Observation will hold good in regard to LOVE. For as we often read of the LOVE of GOD, and of the FATHER, so we do likewise of the LOVE of CHRIST. As the Father hath loved me, so have I LOVED YOU, says our Lord himself to his Disciples. John xv. 9.—God so LOVED the World, that He gave his only-begotten Son, &c. iii. 16. But we are told, that CHRIST also hath LOVED US, and hath GIVEN HIMSELF for us, &c. Eph. v. 2.—Who shall separate us from the LOVE of CHRIST? says St. Paul to the Romans. Which is no other

other than what he afterwards calls, *the LOVE OF GOD, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Rom. viii. 35—39.—And, to mention but one Place more: *THE LOVE OF CHRIST, which passeth Knowledge.* Eph. iii. 19.—the Meaning is; which Love, being *infinite*, cannot be thoroughly *known*, or comprehended, by our *finite* Capacities.—An Expression of the same Import with that applied to *the Peace of God, which PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING.* Phil. iv. 7.—And as we read of the Love of the Father, and of the Son, so also of *the Love of the SPIRIT;* Rom. xv. 30: whose *FRUIT IS LOVE.* Gal. v. 22: and who is called *the SPIRIT OF LOVE.* 2 Tim. i. 7.—Lastly, the Word *FELLOWSHIP* is applied to the Father and the Son, as well as to the Holy Ghost: to both jointly, 1 John i. 3; and to the Son singly, 1 Cor. i. 9. So likewise, our Sanctification¹, our inward Peace, and Comfort,

¹ Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Rom. xv. 16.—to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus. 1 Cor. i. 2.—sanctified by God the Father—Jude i. It is remarkable, that the Words in the Original are exactly the same in all the three Passages; the Preposition *ἐν*, or *in*, being used in every one; which is rightly rendered,

fort^m, and other spiritual and divine Operations, are in Scripture ascribed to each, and every, Person in the Blessed Trinity; since

it rendered, *by*, in the first and third Texts; and should have been so in the other. So again: *And the very GOD OF PEACE sanctify you wholly.* 1 Theff. v. 23.—*Even as CHRIST also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might SANCTIFY and cleanse it.* Eph. v. 25, 26. When therefore we read of the *Sanctification of the Spirit*, 2 Theff. ii. 13; and 1 Pet. i. 2; though it be represented as the Effect of the *immediate* Operation of the Holy Spirit, yet we are not so to understand it, as if the Father and the Son were excluded from any Share in this divine Act; since it appears that there is a *Concurrence* of the three Persons herein, in a Manner that we cannot explain or comprehend. The like Observation will hold good in regard to their being spiritually *present*, or *dwelling*, in the Faithful. Compare 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. iii. 17; and Rom. viii. 11—with many other Texts to the same Purpose.

^m The COMFORTER is a Title peculiarly given to the Holy Spirit by our Saviour, John xiv. 26, and elsewhere; yet not so, as to exclude the Father and the Son from this Act of divine Goodness, though it be attributed to the Spirit as the *immediate Agent*, with respect to his *personal* Capacity, and the Office He sustains in the Economy of Grace. When we consider the divine Nature, there is then but ONE COMFORTER, as there is but ONE GOD: and this we find ascribed to each divine Person distinctly. Thus; *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies, and the GOD OF ALL COMFORT: who COMFORTETH us in all our Tribulation, &c.* 2 Cor. i. 3, 4.—Again; *If there be therefore any CONSOLATION in CHRIST.* Phil. ii. 1. And in another

Place

it is *the* SAME GOD, *which* WORKETH ALL IN ALL^a. 1 Cor. xii. 6. Our Church therefore seems to have given us the full Sense of the Apostolical Benediction, in the Form of Blessing she has appointed to be used at the End of the Communion-Service, where the single Word, BLESSING," applied to the three Persons in the Trinity without

Place the Apostle prays to the Father and Son *jointly*, as the Authors of spiritual Comfort : *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us EVERLASTING CONSOLATION—COMFORT your Hearts,* &c. 2 Theff. ii. 16, 17. So likewise we read of JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST. Rom. xiv. 17 ; and Joy of the Holy Ghost, 1 Theff. i. 6. But we are also directed to *rejoice in THE LORD*, Phil. iii. 1 and iv. 4 (a Title commonly appropriated to Christ in St. Paul's Epistles) : and the same Apostle in another Place prays ; *the GOD OF HOPE fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing,* &c. Rom. xv. 13.

^a These Words, in the Passage referred to, are spoken of the Person of the Father ; but we meet with the very same Expression applied to the Spirit presently afterwards ; where it is said, *all these* WORKETH (*ἐνεργεῖ*) *that one and the self-same Spirit,* &c. Ver. 11. And the same inherent, almighty, Power of *working* is ascribed to Christ, Phil. iii. 21 ; though on a different Occasion—*according to the WORKING* (*τὴν ἐνέργειαν*) *whereby he is able even to subdue ALL THINGS unto Himself.* For He is ALL AND IN ALL ; Col. iii. 11. We may therefore, I think, safely apply the Text, as I have done, to the Deity, without Distinction ; since it is, in that Sense, strictly true, that it is *the* SAME GOD *which* *worketh* All in All.

Distinction,

Distinction, includes what the Apostle expresses in *different* Words; namely, "the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost." And the Prayer is the same in both; that this divine Blessing may "be with us all evermore;" or, "be amongst us, and remain with us always." To which let us all most devoutly answer, AMEN:

The Communion-Service.

This whole Office being entitled in our Prayer-Books, "The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion;" it may well be asked, why any Part of it should be used at such Times as the Lord's Supper is not administered?—For this two Reasons may be given. The one is, that it is intended to put us in Mind of our Obligation to communicate more frequently than we do: the other, that those Parts of the Service, appointed to be used when there is no Communion, are such as we may always attend to, and join in, with great Propriety, whether we communicate

or not.—In the first and purest Ages of the Church, the Eucharist, or the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, made a constant Part of the daily Service ; agreeably to what we read in the Acts of the Apostles, Ch. ii. 46, of their *continuing DAILY with one Accord in the Temple, and BREAKING BREAD, &c.*—Afterwards, as Piety and Charity decreased, this heavenly Banquet, this Feast of Love, was celebrated only on Sundays and Holy-days ; and on all such Days our Church still directs *a Part* of the Office to be used, to remind us that we ought to join in *the whole* ; as every serious and sincere Christian must surely wish to do, at least on Sundays. A weekly Communion may appear very strange to many Persons, who are governed more by Custom than by Reason, and have conceived foolish Notions, and Prejudices, concerning this essential Branch of Christian Worship : But I am sure, it would be a very rational and useful Practice, and perfectly agreeable to the Design of its Institution, as well as to that of the Christian Sabbath. To praise God for his Mercy and Goodness, in the Redemption

demption of Mankind by the Death and Sacrifice of his dear Son, is certainly a principal End of our assembling together on the Lord's Day : which End can never be fully answered, unless we commemorate that Sacrifice in the Manner our Redeemer has appointed ; that is, by receiving the holy Sacrament. Without this our Devotions are, at best, but imperfect ; and we can only hope that God will accept of a willing Mind, where an Opportunity is wanting of serving Him more completely. And here I cannot but take Notice of a most shameful and unchristian Custom, that too generally prevails in Parishes in the Country, of administering the Sacrament only three or four Times in the Year ^p. If the Clergy are thus remiss in

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^p It were much to be wished that the Bishops would make this an Article of Enquiry at their Visitations, and exert their Authority in reforming this scandalous Neglect of Duty in the parochial Ministers. Supposing a *monthly* Communion were thought too frequent (though I would hope no Christian Prelate should think, or say so) would it not be highly expedient to direct, and command, every Incumbent, to administer the Sacrament at least *every other Month* ? not to suffer the long Interval of Six or Seven Months, between Whit Sunday and Christmas, to pass with only one Communion, or perhaps with

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doing their Duty, let them not blame the People for neglecting their's. What must they think of the Importance, or Obligation, of that sacred Ordinance, which their spiritual Guide so seldom partakes of himself, or gives them an Opportunity of joining in?— I know what will be urged in Excuse for this Neglect; “that it is the People's Fault, not the Minister's — that if they shewed a Disposition to communicate oftener, he would be ready to administer — that very few attend the Lord's Table at the Times it is prepared for them — that, were it more frequently prepared, perhaps there would be none at all.” — But, in Answer to all this, I say, let him shew his Readiness to do his Duty — let him set an Example — let him make the Trial. “Three” Com-

none at all? But, whether the Bishops interfere or not, every Minister of a Parish may, and ought to, give his Parishioners frequent Opportunities of performing this Part of their Duty. And in very populous Places, especially where there are many Gentry, whose Servants cannot attend at the usual Time; would it not be of Use to celebrate the Lord's Supper once a Month at an early Hour, suppose about Eight o'Clock, that such Persons, if well-disposed, might communicate, without neglecting their necessary Attendance in the Family to which they belong?

municants

municants at least (the Number our Church requires as necessary to a Communion) would, I dare say, rarely be wanting : and where *three only* are gathered together in the Name of Christ, his Presence and Blessing will as surely attend them, as if there were three thousand. But I am persuaded, that the Example of a few devout Christians would in Time bring in others ; especially if the Clergy would take Pains, both in private and public, to instruct Men in the

A a 3 Nature

* The great Benefit of *private* Admonition, and the superior Advantages it has over the best *public* Instructions, must appear to every considerate Person. However neglected, it is certainly a very material Part of the Duty of those, who are intrusted with the Care of Souls. And it is perhaps on no Account more wanted, than with respect to the Duty I am pleading for. Sermons upon the Subject, though very proper, will not answer the Purpose so effectually ; because there is such a Variety of Doubts, and Fears, and Scruples entertained about it, that a general Discourse can never reach every particular Case, or solve the Difficulties and Objections arising upon it. Besides, what a Minister delivers from the Pulpit is too often looked upon as mere Matter of Form ; as a Task that he is obliged to go through, in Conformity to the established Order. But when he enters into familiar Conversation on religious Subjects, when he condescends to hearken to his People patiently, and to answer their Questions calmly and affectionately, then he appears to be in earnest,

Nature and Obligation of this most important, much-neglected Duty. Recommending this, as I earnestly do, to their serious Consideration, I shall now proceed to treat of that Part of the Service, which is used when there is no Communion.

It begins very properly with the Lord's Prayer; which has been already explained. Then follows the Collect for Purity; a most admirable Prayer, which, I think, might be used, with great Propriety, privately by every Person at his first coming into Church; as will more fully appear, if we consider the Matter it contains, and the Design of its being placed at the Beginning of this solemn Service. The Heart of Man, in his fallen Estate, is represented to us in Scripture as a corrupt and polluted Fountain; which, if

nest, and to have their Interests truly at Heart; every Word he says will then have it's due Weight; his Arguments will convince, and his Exhortations make a deep and lasting Impression. He that thus *winneeth Souls, is wise indeed.*

" If this Prayer be thought too long (though to repeat it deliberately and devoutly would not take up above a Minute) the following shorter one may be used. " Let the Words of my Mouth, and the Meditation of my Heart, be now and ever acceptable in thy Sight: O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer!" Pf. xix. 14.

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left to itself, will send forth Streams of all Manner of Impurity. Hence continually flow evil Thoughts, vain Imaginations, and wicked Desires; which render us wholly unfit for the Service and Worship of Him, who is *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*. Now, since we are told, that *the Preparation of the Heart in Man is from the Lord*, Prov. xvi. 1, we should most earnestly and devoutly apply to Him for his sanctifying Grace, to cleanse and purify our Hearts, and qualify them for his Service. And as we should do this at all Times, making it a constant Part of our daily Petitions; so are we more especially obliged to it, when we are about to worship God in public, and most of all, before we approach his holy Table. For this Purpose nothing could be better contrived than the Collect before us; which whoever uses with fervent Piety (joining his own sincere Endeavours to keep his Mind intent on the solemn Business he is engaged in) will, I am persuaded, find the happy Effect of it, and perceive those vain and wicked Thoughts, that are apt to disturb his Devotion, gradually vanish, and his Atten-

tion become fixed on its proper Object *. The Washings, prescribed under the Jewish Dispensation, were doubtless designed to point out that inward Purity of the Heart, required in the Worship of Almighty God. This is plainly alluded to in that significant Declaration of the Psalmist ; *I will wash my Hands in INNOCENCY : so will I compass thine Altar, O Lord.* Pf. xxvi. 6. It was this *inward* Washing and Purification, that God always chiefly regarded. It was this, that

* Idle, and even profane, Thoughts will sometimes haunt the Breasts, and disturb the Devotion, of the most sincere and faithful Servants of God. They are partly owing to Weakness of Constitution and bodily Disorders ; and partly to the Suggestions of evil Spirits. If they are not entertained with Complacency, but excite our Horror and Detestation, it is a sure Sign that they are involuntary ; and if involuntary, they cannot be sinful. On this Account, though it is natural to be sorry for them, they should never make us unhappy. The Remedy is plain and easy : *Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you : Draw nigh to God, (in humble and hearty Prayer) and He will draw nigh to you.* But never complain of evil Thoughts, 'till you have taken this only effectual Method to remove them ; nor expect the Assistance of divine Grace, unless you apply for it frequently, earnestly, and devoutly. After all, we must not suppose that we shall be intirely free from these troublesome Companions on this Side the Grave : our Services of every kind in this frail State will be at best imperfect. Uninterrupted Devotion is reserved for the Happiness of Heaven.

made

made the Worship of those Israëlites accepted, in the Days of Hezekiah; who, when they came to eat the Passover, had prepared *their HEARTS to seek God*, though they had not been *cleansed according to the Purification of the Sanctuary*. 2 Chron. xxx. 19. With the greatest Reason therefore are we taught to pray, before our Approach to the Christian Altar, that it may please Him, “to whom all Hearts are open, all Desires known, and from whom no Secrets are hid;” to “*cleanse the Thoughts of our Hearts by the Inspiration of his Holy Spirit*”—to fill them with holy Inclinations, and pure Affections—“that we may perfectly love” Him; or, as our Saviour expresses it, love Him *with all our Hearts*; “and worthily magnify his Holy Name”—that is, that we may worship Him devoutly and acceptably, in all our Addresses to the Throne of Grace, but more particularly in this our “Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving.” And this we beg through the Merits and Mediation of “Christ our Lord.”

Now follow the ten Commandments, which the Priest is directed to “rehearse *distinctly*”—(slowly and deliberately, in a

Manner

Manner suitable to the Importance of the Subject, and the Dignity of him, whose Commands they are) "the People still kneeling;" both to shew their Reverence of the divine Law-giver, and to be ready to offer up their humble Petitions for Mercy and Grace, at the End of each Commandment. And let no one think himself unconcerned, or suffer his Eyes or Thoughts to wander, in this very interesting and material Part of the Service. **THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN IS BY THE LAW;** and it is highly fitting, that we should hear and attend to it, in order to be duly sensible of our manifold Transgressions, and of the infinite Goodness of God, in offering us a Pardon through our blessed Redeemer. Let us therefore hearken attentively to each Commandment; considering the full Purport and Extent of it, and condemning ourselves heartily for our fundry Offences against it. And let us, with the most unfeigned Humility and Contrition, implore the divine Mercy and Forgiveness for what is past; and at the same Time beseech God, to "incline our Hearts to keep his Law," more carefully and diligently, for the future.

future.——I shall now endeavour to explain the Sense and Meaning of each Commandment distinctly; shewing what Sins are forbidden, and what Duties enjoined; that we may thereby be the better enabled to *search and try our Ways, and turn again to the Lord.*

These Commandments, although delivered at first to the Jewish People only, and enforced by a Motive to Obedience peculiar to them, do yet equally concern and oblige all Mankind to the End of the World; inasmuch as they contain the moral Law of God, which is of perpetual and unchangeable Obligation. The first Part alone of the Introduction to them is recited in our Liturgy; “*I AM THE LORD THY GOD:*” because that only is strictly applicable to Us Christians. The Words which follow in the Original; *which have brought Thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage,*” Exod. xx. 2. are here omitted, as relating particularly to the Jews. In a *spiritual* Sense, however, we may very justly apply them to ourselves; since *their Deliverance* out of Egyptian Bondage foreshewed, and shadowed out, *our* far greater

greater *Redemption* from the Slavery of Sin, and the Power of Satan; and their *earthly Canaan* prefigured that true *Land of Promise*, the *heavenly Canaan*, which is opened to us through the Merits of Christ. When therefore we hear those Words repeated, "I AM THE LORD THY GOD;" we should consider Him, not only as our Creator and Preserver, but in a more especial Manner, as the merciful Author of our Redemption and Salvation. — It follows: "Thou shalt have none other Gods but me" — The first and principal Thing, forbidden in these Words, is the acknowledging, believing in, or worshipping, any other God besides the one only living and true God, the Lord JEHOVAH, the Maker and Governor of the Universe. This is the Sin of Heathenism; which in the strict and gross Sense, I presume, there is no Fear of our falling into. Yet it deserves well to be considered, whether the Arians and other Heretics, who deny the true and proper Divinity of our blessed Saviour, are not in some Sort guilty of a Breach of this Law, when they worship and pray to Him, whom they do not own as the true God.

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To distinguish, as they pretend to do, between a supreme and inferior Deity, is in Effect to acknowledge two different Gods: and to speak of a *made* or *created* God, as they declare our Lord to be, is a manifest Contradiction in Terms; no less absurd, than it is impious. In short, there is, there can be, no Medium between God and his Creatures: and whoever pays divine Honours to any of the latter, must offend against *the first and great Commandment*. But if we keep clear of these flagrant Transgressions, shall we therefore flatter ourselves that we are free from all Offences against this first Law of God, and that therefore we need not ask Forgiveness on this Head? — God forbid. Let us hear how our Saviour expounds it, and then ask our Consciences, if we have kept it, as we ought. **THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIND.** Matt. xxii. 37. Our Love of God must be hearty, sincere, ardent: and our Obedience, in Consequence of it, willing, ready, constant, uniform, uninterrupted. Every Defect, therefore, in these Particulars

culars is, in some Degree, a Breach of the first Commandment. An immoderate *Love of the World*, we are assured, is absolutely contrary to, and inconsistent with, *the Love of the Father*; consequently is a direct Violation of that Law, which enjoins it. And *Covetousness*, we are expressly told, is IDOLATRY. Col. iii. 5: which whoever is guilty of, *hath no Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God.* Eph. v. 5.

As the first Commandment forbids the Worship of false Gods; of any Creature, real or imaginary, instead of the one great Creator; so the second prohibits the Worship of the true God under false Representations. I should rather say, the *pretended* Worship of Him in that Manner: for, however such Worshipers may argue, or distinguish, the Worship of an Image can in no Sense be expressive of, or reconciled with the Worship of HIM, who has declared, that *He will not give his Glory to another, neither his Praise to graven Images.* Is. xlii. 8. Of this Sort of Idolatry the Jews of old were most eminently guilty; who, in direct Contradiction both to the Letter and Spirit of
this

this plain and positive Injunction, as well as to the repeated Admonitions of Moses (who so strictly charged them to *take good Heed* of falling into this Sin; because they *saw no Manner of Similitude on the Day that the Lord spake unto them in Horeb*, Deut. iv. 15.) made themselves a *golden Calf* in the Wilderness, and set up the same Resemblance, as they pretended, of the true God, in after Ages at Dan and Bethel. And with the same Crime are the Members of the Church of Rome justly chargeable, who most profanely set up Images and Pictures of God and of Christ, nay of the Virgin Mary, and of Saints; and *fall down unto them*, and *worship them*, and *pray unto them*: who pay divine Honour and Adoration even to the Crucifix, instead of worshipping Him who suffered on the Cross; who is in Truth, what they impiously call the Wood that represents it, “our only Hope;” who alone can “increase the Joy and Grace of the godly, and blot out the Sins of the wicked,” (on their true Repentance) for which they offer up their Prayers directly to their Idol. Against all such gross and flagrant Violations of this Command-

Commandment the divine Vengeance is in a peculiar Manner denounced ; “ for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God ” — jealous of my Glory and Honour, which I will not suffer to be given to any Creature, or Image, with Impunity ; but will “ visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, unto the third and fourth Generation of them that HATE ME.” Image-Worship is therefore, in the strictest Propriety of Speech, an HATRED OF GOD, and will be punished accordingly ; if not with signal Judgment, and Marks of the divine Anger, in this Life, (as was the Case with the idolatrous Jews) yet, with what is infinitely more terrible, *eternal* Sufferings in the Life to come ; where we are told that all IDOLATERS *shall have their Part in the Lake which burneth with Fire and Brimstone ; which is the second Death* :

Rev.

‘ These, and other the like, terrible Denunciations of the Wrath and Vengeance of God against Idolaters, well deserve the serious Consideration of every Member of the *idolatrous* Church of Rome. Yet it is far from my Intention to make a general Application of them to the Papists ; many of whom, I hope, and am firmly persuaded, mean well, and *know not what they do*. Of such we may reasonably entertain the most favourable Sentiments ; and with a well-grounded Hope re-

commend

Rev. xxi. 8.—After the Denunciation of Punishment to those that thus *hate* God, follows a Promise of “ Mercy unto thousands, in them that *love* Him, and keep his Commandments;” which is the only sure Sign of loving Him. This is worded in *general* Terms; since Mercy and Blessing are promised only to a *general* Observance of God’s Laws. But the *particular* Instance of Love or Obedience, which this Commandment enjoins, seems to be that true and *spiritual* Worship of God, which is directly contrary to the *idolatrous* Worship here forbidden. GOD IS A SPIRIT, says our blessed Lord, in his Discourse with the Woman of Samaria, *and they that worship Him must worship Him IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.* John iv. 24. To worship Him aright and acceptably, we must entertain

commend them to the Mercy and Compassion of our good and gracious God. But with the Romish *Clergy* the Case is widely different. They are, in general, Men of Knowledge and Learning; and must see the Folly and Iniquity of those Practices, which they countenance and encourage. Of such wicked and deceitful Guides, who *cause the People to err*, Charity itself can hardly have a favourable Thought; or suppose them clear of *intentional*, as well as *actual* Idolatry. However, it becomes not us to pronounce their Doom, or even to wish them the Punishment they seem to deserve. May it please Thee, O merciful Father, to turn their Hearts!

just and worthy Notions concerning Him, as of a Spirit infinitely pure and holy, of whom we can form no Image or Likeness: and we must pray to Him, and praise Him, with the most sincere and fervent Devotion, with Faith and Love unfeigned. This is the grand Duty required of us in this Commandment; and every Deviation from it is consequently a Breach of this Law, which, if persisted in, will most assuredly not pass unpunished. We must not therefore fancy ourselves clear in this Respect, because we are not directly guilty of gross Idolatry; but must reflect with Shame and Sorrow on all our false or unworthy Notions of the divine Majesty, and on all our Defects, and Omissions, in regard to that Homage and Worship, we are bound to pay Him. For all these we must humbly implore his Mercy and Forgiveness; beseeching Him to “incline our Hearts to keep this Law” more regularly, and to worship Him more truly and sincerely, for the future.

The third Commandment forbids “taking the Name of the Lord our God in vain:” by which is to be understood, first and principally,

pally, false Swearing, or Perjury: A Sin of the greatest Malignity, as it is a most profane Mockery of God, a setting the Almighty at Defiance. It is saying, with the Blasphemers described by the Psalmist, *How doth God know? and is there Knowledge in the most High?*—*The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.* Ps. lxxiii. 11; and xciv. 7.—Suitable to the Greatness of this Crime is the Penalty denounced against those that commit it: “For the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his Name in vain:” that is, He will most severely punish; *He will by no Means clear him. I will bring forth THE CURSE, saith the Lord of Hosts, and it shall enter into the House of him that SWEARETH FALSELY by my Name: and it shall remain in the Midst of his House, and shall consume it.* Zech. v. 4. And again; *I will come near to you to Judgment, and I will be a swift Witness against the Sorcerers, and against the Adulterers, and against FALSE SWEARERS.* Mal. iii. 5. — But besides the abominable Sin of Perjury, there are others plainly forbidden by this Commandment; such as profane and blasphemous Discourse, and

cursing and swearing in common Conversation. This last is a most shocking, and yet a very prevailing, Practice; even amongst Men that are not wholly abandoned to Iniquity, as well as with the openly dissolute and profane. Yet surely, it is utterly repugnant to all true Sense of Religion, nay even to any just Pretence to it, thus to *take the HOLY AND REVEREND NAME of GOD in vain*. It is not only in itself a daring Insolence and Indignity offered to the Almighty, but it leads Men into other Sins, and exposes them continually to the Guilt of swearing falsely. It is a Sin to which there is no Temptation in Nature; and is moreover strongly and expressly condemned by our Saviour, and his Apostle. *I say unto you, SWEAR NOT AT ALL*; that is, in common Discourse, as our Lord afterwards clearly explains it: *But let your Communication be, Yea, Yea; Nay, Nay*: let your ordinary Conversation consist only of bare Affirmations, and Denials; *for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of Evil*; or proceedeth from the EVIL ONE. Matt. v. 34—37. And St. James no less emphatically; *Above all Things, my Brethren, swear not —*
but

but let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay, Nay;

LEST YE FALL INTO CONDEMNATION.

Jam. v. 12. Another Offence against this Law is the frequent, careless, and irreverent Use of God's sacred Name in common Discourse, though without any solemn Appeal to Him. And this, however customary and fashionable, is certainly in some Degree criminal, as being inconsistent with that Awe and Reverence we ought to bear constantly in our Minds, and with that Respect and Veneration we should shew in our Conversation, towards the great Lord of Heaven and Earth : our Obligation to which is plainly implied in this Commandment. Consequently, every Failure in this Respect (of which the best of us, I fear, are too often guilty) is evidently a Breach of the Law, for which we must implore the divine Mercy and Pardon.

The fourth Commandment relates wholly to the Observance of the Sabbath — “Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day.” — Now to keep it holy, is, first and chiefly, to observe it as a Day of Rest : as the very Name of it implies ; the Word

Sabbath signifying *Rest*. It appears likewise from the original End of it's Institution, to commemorate the Creation of the World; which being accomplished in Six Days, *God rested on the Seventh Day; and God blessed the Seventh Day, and sanctified it.* Gen. ii. 2, 3. Besides the Sabbath has a Reference to the future State of the blessed in Heaven; our Rest here on the Sabbath-day being intended as a Type or Representation of that eternal State of Rest, where the faithful Servants of the Lord shall *rest from their Labours.* Rev. xiv. 13. So we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews; *There remaineth therefore a REST* (or, as it is literally and rightly rendered in the Margin, a KEEPING OF A SABBATH) *to the People of God.* Heb. iv. 9. And since our blessed Lord has procured us *an Entrance into this Rest*, of which He has given us Assurance by his Rising from the Dead on the first Day of the Week, that Day is therefore observed as the Christian Sabbath; or, as it is called in Scripture, THE LORD'S DAY. Rev. i. 10. To observe which as we ought, we must abstain from all Labour whatsoever, excepting

excepting Works of absolute Necessity, and Charity. The former are plainly allowed, the latter strongly recommended and enjoined, by our great Master, who is *Lord also of the Sabbath*. In Pursuance of the same divine Example, and according to the constant Practice of the Jewish, as well as Christian Church in all Ages, we must dedicate a Part of that sacred Day to the solemn Worship of Almighty God; attending the public Service, both in the Morning and Evening, unless hindered by Illness, or by taking Care of the Sick; and we should also employ some Portion of it in private Prayer, and Meditation, and in reading good Books at home. This it is, "to keep holy the Sabbath-day"—whereas to spend it in Business or Diversions, in travelling "or Luxury,

" The Practice of driving Stage-Coaches, and other such Vehicles, on a Sunday, which is become so common in most of the populous Towns and Villages near the Metropolis, is certainly a most daring Offence against the Laws both of God and Man. Of the former, I presume, there can be no Dispute; since we are forbidden, in the strongest and plainest Terms, not only to work ourselves, but to suffer our *Servants*, or our *Cattle*, to labour, on that sacred Day of Rest. — But concerning the Laws of the Land, in this Matter, some Doubts

in Sloth and Idleness (I mean, passing it *idly* at home, or abroad, instead of going to Church, and *employing* the Mind in *religious Exercises*) is a shameful Profanation of it, a Contempt of a divine Ordinance, a direct Breach of a plain and positive Law of God.

Thus far the Laws of the first Table, which respect our Duty towards God.—We come now to those of the Second, concerning our Duty towards our Neighbour. And these, as the Apostle teaches, may be all *briefly comprehended in this Saying, namely,*

perhaps may arise; because the Word, *Coach* or *Stage*, does not occur in those Acts of Parliament, which relate to the due Observation of the Lord's Day. However, as they strictly forbid all *Carriers, Waggon-men, Wain-men, &c.* travelling on that Day; and enact "in general, that no Tradesman, Artificer, Workman, Labourer, or OTHER PERSON, shall do or exercise *any* worldly Labour, Business, or Work of their ORDINARY CALLINGS, on the Lord's Day;" it follows undeniably, that the driving of Stages, or the like, though not explicitly, is virtually disallowed and condemned by those Laws. At the Time when they were made, Stage-Coaches were not in Use, therefore could not be specified; but as other Carriages are not suffered to be driven on Sundays, the Use of these is by evident Implication forbidden.* See 3 C. c. i.; and 29 C. ii. c. 7. And by a later Act, of 9 Ann. which licenses certain "Hackney Coachmen and Chairmen within the Bills of Mortality," there is no Exemption of *Stages*, or other Carriages of any Sort; which surely would have been mentioned, had any such Indulgence been intended.

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Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. Rom. xiii. 9 : which Rule, duly observed, would be *the fulfilling of this Part of the Law* ; Ver. 10.—The fifth Commandment, or the first of the Second Table, mentions only the Duty of Children to Parents ; but is to be understood to extend to the other relative Duties of Life ; to the mutual Obligations of Superiors and Inferiors, in general. And to this Commandment there is a particular Promise annexed ; “ that thy Days may be long in the Land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” — Long Life is often promised to the Jews as a Reward of Obedience. But as the Land, here spoken of, which the Lord gave to them, was certainly a Type or Figure of a *better Country, that is an heavenly* ; so the Promise of *long Life in that Land* is undoubtedly significant of an happy ETERNITY. In that Sense at least we Christians must apply it.—Now the Duties enjoined by this Commandment are these that follow : first, an unfeigned Love, Honour, and Reverence to our Parents ; a strict and ready Obedience to them in all their lawful Commands, even though we
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are not fully convinced of their Necessity or Propriety : a constant Endeavour to make their Lives as easy and comfortable to them as we can, which will always greatly depend on the Behaviour of their Children towards them ; a dutiful Respect to them on all Occasions ; a Readiness to relieve their Wants, to help their Infirmities, and to bear with their Failings. On the other hand, Parents are required to love, support, instruct, and watch over their Children with constant Care and Attention ; not *to provoke them to Anger*, by severe and harsh Treatment, *lest they be discouraged* ; but to be gentle and patient, making all due Allowances for the Weaknesses and Frailties of Youth ; and to endeavour, by all prudent Means, to gain their Affection and Confidence, as well as their Honour and Respect : to provide carefully for their worldly Interest, giving them an Education suitable to their Rank and Expectations in Life ; and above all, in whatsoever Station they are to be placed, to *bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord* ; to instruct them in the *one Thing needful*, the Care of their immortal Souls.—

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The other Duties, here commanded, are those of Subjects to their Prince, and other subordinate Governors; to obey them, in all Things lawful, readily, cheerfully, and uniformly; and to treat them with the utmost Respect, both in their Words and Actions. Of Servants to their Masters, to be diligent and faithful, *obeying them, not with Eye-Service, as Men-pleasers, but in Singleness of Heart, fearing God.* Col. iii. 22. Of the Laity in general to the Ministers of the Gospel; to contribute liberally and cheerfully to their Support, and to pay them such a Respect as is due to the *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*; to bear with their Failings and Imperfections, considering that they are *Men of like Passions with ourselves*; to applaud, and reward them for their good Deeds; and to attend to their public Instructions, and private Admonitions, with a Mind disposed to be informed and improved. Lastly, of the Young to the Old; and of the Poor, and those in low Stations, to the Rich and Great; to shew them that Deference and Respect, which is due to superior Age, and Rank, and which is absolutely

lutely necessary to the maintaining of good Order and Decency in the World. Governors, and Superiors of every Kind, are in their Turn required to use their Authority with Gentleness and Moderation ; to be shining Examples of Virtue and Piety ; and in every Thing to consult the real Good and Happiness of those beneath them. — These being the Duties enjoined by this Commandment, it is easy to infer what are the Sins forbidden by it ; which are all derived from that accursed Spirit of Rebellion and Opposition on the one hand, and of Pride and Tyranny on the other, which the Scriptures every where so strongly condemn ; and from whence flow Disobedience, Oppression, Cruelty, Confusion, and, in short, every evil Work.

The Sixth Commandment prohibits, not only the heinous Sin of Murder ^w, but all

^w Self-Murder is certainly included in this Prohibition. The fashionable Custom of Duelling also plainly comes under it ; which is a Sort of *double* Murder ; a Sin of *complicated* Guilt ; attended with every aggravating, but not one extenuating, Circumstance. For a Man to go coolly and deliberately to kill his Fellow-Creature, and expose his own Life ; to rush into Eternity full of Malice and Revenge ; how shocking the Thought ! how truly dreadful the Consequence !

injurious

injurious Treatment of our Neighbour, which tends to hasten his Death, or to make his Life unhappy. Nor is it confined only to our Actions, but extends to our Words, and the Affections of our Mind. *Whosoever hateth his Brother, is* (in the Scripture-Sense) **a MURDERER.** 1 John iii. 15 : a Follower of him, who *was a Murderer from the Beginning.* John viii. 44. Even ill-grounded and immoderate Anger, as well as abusive Language, is a Species of the same Crime : for so our Saviour expressly assures us, in his Comment upon this Commandment ; *Whosoever is angry with his Brother without a Cause, shall be in Danger of the Judgment* — shall have his Proportion of Guilt in transgressing this Law, and consequently of Punishment—*and whosoever shall say to his Brother, Raca, or thou silly Fellow, that is, shall treat him with Derision and Contempt, shall be in Danger of the Council ; or shall be exposed to a severer Condemnation : but whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in Danger of Hell-Fire.* Matt. v. 22 ; that is, whosoever shall suffer his Passion to break forth into violent Rail-
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ing and Abuse, shall meet with a still greater Degree of Torment, in the State of the damned. These being the Sins prohibited by this Law, it must evidently be understood to enjoin Love, Meekness, Kindness, Peaceableness, and a general Disposition to promote the Welfare and Happiness of all Men.

The seventh Commandment is levelled against those Sins, which are in a strict and peculiar Sense called *the Lusts of the Flesh*, such as Adultery, Fornication, Uncleaness, Lasciviousness. For, although the first of these only is named, as being the most atrocious, yet they are all plainly included, and condemned: as we find them frequently ranged together, and equally reprov'd, in the severest Terms, in the Writings of the New Testament. Our blessed Lord tells us, that *whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his Heart.* Matt. v. 28; that is, whosoever cherishes and indulges those wanton and impure Desires of the Heart, which it is his Duty to root out, though he may not proceed to the outward Act, is equally guilty in
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the Sight of God, who *requireth Truth in the inward Parts*, and whom none but *the pure in Heart shall see*, in his Kingdom of Bliss and Glory. In a Word, all unclean lustful Thoughts, and obscene immodest Discourse; with whatever tends to pamper and inflame the Body; as Luxury, Intemperance, and the like; are clearly forbidden by this Precept: which requires us to be chaste, modest, and decent, to *crucify the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts*. It may also be understood to enforce, in a particular Manner, the reciprocal Duties of Husbands and Wives; conjugal Love and Fidelity being directly opposite to the Sin of Adultery, which it principally condemns.

Under the Eighth Commandment are forbidden Robbing by Force and Violence, private Theft or Stealing, Injustice, Extortion, Fraud, and Over-reaching of every Kind, and in every Situation of Life. There is one Species of Fraud, or Cheating (for it deserves no better a Name) very commonly practised, and too much encouraged by all Ranks of People, which certainly comes within the Prohibition of this Law; and that is, Smuggling.

gling. For surely to defraud the Public, is no less criminal, than to injure or invade private Property : and besides, it is a direct Violation of that apostolical Injunction, to *render to all their Dues : Tribute to whom Tribute is due*, CUSTOM TO WHOM CUSTOM. Rom. xiii. 7. — The Duties enjoined in this Commandment are Justice and Equity, Honesty and Fidelity, Truth and Fairness in all our Dealings with one another : in a Word, *to do unto all Men, as we would that they should do unto us.*

The ninth Commandment forbids whatever may be injurious to the good Name or Reputation of our Neighbour; that is, of any Person, who may be any way affected by us. For the Word, *Neighbour*, in the Scripture Sense, is of universal Extent, including all Mankind ; since *we are all Members one of another.* Eph. iv. 25. The “ bearing false Witness,” in a Court of Judicature, is set down as the highest Breach of this Law. — Other Offences against it are, Lying, Slander, Detraction, *Whisperings, Back-bitings*, and Tale-bearing. This last, and most common, Way of hurting our Neighbour’s Reputation,

putation, however lightly some Persons may think of it, is expressly condemned both in the Old and New Testament. *Thou shalt not go up and down as a Tale-bearer among thy People*; says the Lord by his Servant Moses. Lev. xix. 16. And Persons of this Sort are thus described and reproved by the Apostle; *They learn to be idle, wandering about from House to House; and not only idle, but TATLERS also, and BUSY BODIES, speaking Things which they ought not.*—1 Tim. v. 13. The contrary Duties here enjoined are strict Veracity; a tender charitable Disposition towards all Men; Backwardness in believing, and Caution in spreading, Reports that are any way disadvantageous to others; not to listen to, much less to take Delight in, the idle Stories of *Tatlers*; and to take Heed to our own *Ways*, that we offend not with our Tongue: always bearing in Mind the Admonition of Solomon, that *in the Multitude of Words there wanteth not Sin; but he that refraineth his Lips is wise.* Prov. x. 19.

The tenth and last Commandment forbids all covetous and inordinate Desires,

fires^v, Envy, and Discontent; striking at the Root from which Fraud, Injustice, Violence, and Oppression proceed. It requires us to keep a constant Guard over the Thoughts and Inclinations of our Hearts; to subdue every irregular Passion and Appetite: to seek, not (principally) *our own, but every Man another's Wealth*; not to repine; but rejoice, at the Prosperity of our Neighbour; and in *whatsoever State* we are, *therein to be content*. — From a due Reflection on

v. The Word, *Covet*, in our Translation of the Bible is used sometimes in a good, and sometimes in a bad Sense. For Instance; *Covet earnestly the best Gifts*. 1 Cor. xii. 31. and again; *Covet to prophesy*. Ib. xiv. 39. Where it is plainly used in a good Sense, to signify an earnest and laudable Desire to obtain, and excel in, the miraculous Gifts of the Holy Spirit. On the other Hand, when St. Paul says, *I have coveted no Man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel*, Acts. xx. 33, the Word *covet* evidently implies an evil or inordinate Desire of Gain; what St. Peter thus expresses; *through Covetousness shall they make Merchandise of you*. 2 Pet. ii. 3. And the Words in the Original are quite different, though rendered by the same Word in our Translation. Now to *covet*, in the Commandment, means not barely to *desire* (for we may in several Cases very innocently desire, and endeavour by lawful Means to obtain, or purchase, what belongs to our Neighbour) but to desire *immoderately*, to try to procure by *indirect Means*, to

murmur

these divine Laws, and an impartial Review of our Lives and Actions, we shall see great Reason to cry out in the Words of our Church; "Lord, have Mercy upon us" for our manifold Sins and Transgressions, "and write all these thy Laws in our Hearts, we beseech Thee."—Engrave them deeply in our Breasts, dispose us to love and take Delight in them, and enable us to keep and obey them.

After the Commandments follows a Prayer for the King. We have the Choice of two; both very excellent, but the former certainly the more compleat, as it includes a Petition

—murmur at our own Lot, and envy that of another. It carries with it the Notion of Discontent, or Dissatisfaction with the Dispensations of Providence. In this Sense the Words, *Lust*, and *Covet*, are used indifferently by our Translators, when they are the same in the Original. Thus; *I had not known LUST* (had not known the Sinfulness of it) *except the Law had said; THOU SHALT NOT COVET.* Rom. vii. 7. The same Word occurs, 1 Cor. x. 6. — *To the Intent we should not LUST after evil Things, as they also LUSTED*: alluding to the Murmurs of the Jews in the Wilderness; who, as Moses expresses it, *fell a lusting, or lusted a Lust*, Numb. xi. 4. and thereby TEMPTED GOD IN THEIR HEART. Ps. lxxviii. 18. The Heart is the Source of all Wickedness; and therefore, to prevent sinful Actions, we are forbidden, upon all Occasions, to entertain sinful Thoughts or Desires.

for the Church, and for the Discharge of the Duty of Subjects towards their Sovereign, of which the other Prayer takes no Notice. It may perhaps be objected on the other Hand, that the former is silent about the Duty of Kings in promoting "the Wealth, Peace, and Godliness" of their Subjects. But this, though not mentioned so explicitly as in the other, is evidently implied in that Clause, where we pray that the King, "knowing whose Minister he is, may above all Things seek the Honour and Glory of God;" which he cannot do, without seeking the Welfare and Happiness of his People; imitating him in his Goodness, whom he represents in his Office.— The remaining Part of the Prayer, which concerns *our* Duty, is most happily expressed — "that We, and all his Subjects, duly considering whose Authority he hath" (a Consideration we should ever seriously attend to) "may faithfully serve, honour, and humbly obey him, in Thee and for Thee" (from a Principle of Conscience, and a thorough Conviction of our Duty) "according to thy blessed Word and Ordinance;" which prescribes nothing more fully

fully and clearly, than our indispensable Obligation to *honour*, and obey, *the King*.

The Collect, Epistle, and Gospel come next in Course: of which it may suffice to observe in general, that they are very judiciously chosen, and suited to their proper Seasons. Nor can we avoid admiring the Wisdom of our Church, in appointing these Portions of Scripture to be read for our Edification, in this most solemn, and important, of all her Offices.

The whole Congregation now joins in repeating the Nicene Creed; which is somewhat more full and explicit than that of the Apostles. That grand Article of our Faith, the Divinity of our blessed Saviour, is here strongly asserted; that He is “God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,” really, truly, and “properly God; “begotten, not made,” or created—“being of the same Substance,” that is of the same *Nature*, or *Essence*, “with the Father”—and that “by HIM” (by the Son *) “all Things were made.”—After speaking

* The Words, “by whom all Things were made,” as they stand in the Creed, may seem to refer to the Father; and the improper Manner of reading them sometimes may countenance

speaking of his Incarnation, Birth, Suffering, Resurrection, and Coming to Judgment "with Glory," (all which Articles have been already fully considered in my Remarks on the Creeds) these Words follow, "of whose Kingdom there shall be no End:" which are Part of the Angel's Address to the Virgin Mary; Luke i. 33. For though his *Mediatorial* Kingdom shall cease, and be delivered up to the Father; yet, as God, He shall reign with Him, and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.

The next Article of the Creed relating to the Holy Ghost, describes Him, in the Language of Scripture, as "the Lord, and Giver of Life." He is expressly called *the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 17 & 18: **THE LORD IS THAT SPIRIT**—and at the End of the last Verse, *even as by the Spirit of the Lord*; which should be rather translated as it is in the Margin, *by THE LORD, THE SPIRIT*. In the same Chapter, Ver. 6, it is said, **THE SPIRIT GIVETH LIFE**. And still more

tenance this Mistake. But it is very plain, that they are here applied to the Son; the Father being spoken of, in the first Part, as the "Maker of Heaven and Earth, &c."

strongly,

strongly, Rom. viii. 2, He is called, THE SPIRIT OF LIFE—the Fountain, the Author, the Giver, of *spiritual* Life: without whose divine Influence and Assistance, we are DEAD *in Trespasser and Sins*—He is further spoken of as proceeding from, or being sent by, the Father and the Son, with respect to the Oeconomy of Grace, and the Office he sustains in the great Work of Man's Redemption—and lastly, as the Inspirer of the Prophets. — Of the remaining three Articles of this Creed, two have been already explained, under that of the Apostles. The other, concerning Baptism, is very properly inserted, to remind us of the Efficacy and Necessity of that divine Ordinance; whereby we are admitted into the new Covenant, and are intitled to all the Benefits of it (which are here comprised under that one most important one “the Remission of Sins”) provided we do not forfeit our Title to them by our Infidelity, or Disobedience.

* I do not mean to exclude the Notion of the Procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, as it respects his *Mode of Existence* (which, I doubt not, the Compilers of the Creed had in View in this Article) but I mention the other, of his *official* Procession, as being oftener taken Notice of in Scripture, and therefore more material for us to be instructed in,

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Here ends that Part of the Communion-Service, which is commonly used, when the Sacrament is not administered. Indeed the Prayer for the Church-militant, and one or more of the Collects placed after the Blessing, ought likewise to be used at such Times; though this Direction of our Church is too generally neglected. For an Explanation of that Prayer, and of the rest of the Office for the Communion, I must refer the Reader to my Essay on the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; or rather, to some better Treatise on that Subject.

The other, concerning Baptism, is very properly insisted, to remind us of the efficacy and Necessity of that divine Ordinance; whereby we are admitted into the new Covenant, and are entitled to all the Benefits of it (which are bestowed under that one most important one "the Remission of Sins") provided we do not forfeit our Title to them by our Unbelief, or Disobedience.

* I do not mean to exclude the Person of the Son, as it respects the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son, as it respects the Person of the Father and the Son, as it respects the Person of the Holy Spirit (which is the same as the Person of the Father and the Son, as it respects the Person of the Holy Spirit).